

WP4 REPORT

THE ROLE OF DISCOURSES AND REPRESENTATIONS IN REALISING 'WELCOMING SPACES'

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WELCOMING SPACES



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INTRODUCTION

Authors

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How is migration in shrinking areas represented in media narratives and discourses? Do migrants have access to produce their own narratives? Are “welcoming spaces” narrated by the local or national press, or in social networks? These are some of the questions that this report grapples with and that have been the focus of much discussion throughout the WP4 of the Welcoming Spaces project, for which this report is produced.

Part of the research remit is to analyze and unpick the prevailing media narratives on migration, on shrinking areas, and on the interaction between the two in welcoming spaces, that exist in the five different national contexts: Italy, Spain, Poland, The Netherlands and Germany. As this report will explain, words matter. For example, migration coverage in media is not simply negative or positive, but also revealing of different viewpoints or narratives. Identifying how migration is framed in media debates is essential because “media frames affect how people think about migration” (IOM, 2020) and influence the agendas of policymakers (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). Studies on media coverage of shrinking areas issues have demonstrated the media’s significant role in determining public opinion and policy formation. Equally, an analysis of how, and if, these topics are covered together in the media in the case study countries is telling of how such debate is covered, or not, in each country. Indeed, lack of coverage of ‘migration in shrinking areas’ is equally telling.

The challenge the research seeks to address is to create connections across stories and lives of shrinking areas impacted by migration and possible welcoming spaces. After first summarising the theoretical underpinning of the analysis, a brief overview of the media in each country follows, and then the following questions are examined through critical discourse analysis in combination with a comprehensive literature review. The research is focused on three main topics:

- *Migrants and migration*. How migrants/migration are/is represented? E.g.: criminalization/dehumanization/intercultural approach/victimization, etc. Who is producing these narratives? Do migrants have access to produce their own narratives? Are they subjects or just objects of representation? Do they organize social or cultural events in the locality? Are there any differences between the representation of migrants at the national and local levels?
- *Shrinking areas*. How shrinking areas are represented? E.g.: nostalgic perspective vs. active agency of territories and communities; vulnerability vs. local resources? Are these areas in the focus of the media and public debate? For which reasons? E.g.: complaints about missing services or policies, focus on incentives and opportunities, etc.
- *Welcoming Spaces*. How welcoming spaces are represented? Are they

mainly narrated by the local or national press, or in social networks? Are there hate speech discourses? If yes, from whom?

Further issues included:

- Power over the discourse: who is producing these discourses? Who is creating them? Do exist some projects that give the possibility to the local community to produce their own discourses?
- Which kind of approach to migration in shrinking areas? Inclusion/emplacement or paternalistic/assistentialism/functional to economic development?
- In the interviews, how do the “older residents” talk about the new residents? And vice-versa? Are they considered part of the local community or temporary guests/strangers? (e.g.: Gastarbeiter model)
- We talk about welcoming spaces, but how “welcoming” is defined? Who is welcomed and who is not welcomed? By whom? Do new residents feel “forced” in the condition to be thankful? Focus on power imbalances... (e.g.: are the main public services and communications translated into another language?)

The investigation of media coverage in each country was structured into a second-level analysis of existing data on narratives about migration and shrinking areas and a first-level analysis of articles and/or other media sources related to narratives produced on welcoming initiatives. Specifically, the second-level analysis took into account existing reports, institutional documents, analyses as well as media articles for each of the two investigation areas and other media material produced in the last 10 years. The minimum number of media articles for the analysis was set at 25; the small number thus allowed for an in-depth analysis of the various topics while guaranteeing coverage of the broad journalistic, media and in-depth study range of each country. Regarding the media articles’ analysis on migration and shrinking areas, online sources extracted from the digital archives of the main national and local newspapers were mainly analysed. The decision to consider online articles depended on the greater accessibility of the data as well as the possibility to carry out more targeted research and selection of sources also using keywords. Due to the average lack of media coverage of welcoming initiatives, the news’ first-level analysis on theme also made particular use of other online content (social media, websites of the organisations involved, audio-visual productions).

Overall, a qualitative rather than quantitative analysis was favoured, aimed at bringing out the main frames through which information on migration, shrinking areas and reception initiatives is conveyed, the main thematic axes, the use of language, the tone.

The report is organized as follows: after a brief explanation of the main topics, such as the power of narratives and discourses on migration, shrinking areas and welcoming spaces, the chapters are divided into case studies, specifically Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland and Germany, finally, a brief collective reflection concludes this report.

Taking as a starting point Stig Hjarvard's definition of mediatization as a process in which "the media exert a particularly dominant influence on other institutions" (2008, 13), this report draws on the role played by media representations in influencing macro symbolic factors and micro perception in both departure and destination countries. In this sense, social order is increasingly mediated, which means that social actions are shaped and informed by media technologies and the logics that orient perceptions and behavior.

In order to understand how representational media practices shape the migration-shrinking area nexus, the research utilizes discourse analysis. "Discourse" refers to the suite of tropes, habits of perception, representation, subject figurations and positions, norms and prescriptions through which phenomena acquire meaning. Rose (2012, p. 190) underlies how a discourse refers to a "group of statements that structure the way a thing is thought and the way we act on the basis of that thinking". As "'Discourses are ways of thinking about [...] describing [and representing] the world which often come to be seen as natural or taken for granted' (Hollingworth and Archer, 2010, p. 586), the discourse analysis is a method that acknowledges the imbrication of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980) and tries to treat knowledge as an effect of power, rather than as some sort of empirical truth (Hall, 1992).

Much of what we know about our society and the world we live in we know through the media, precisely because of the role they play in the processes of social construction of reality (Bentivegna, Boccia Artieri 2019; Luhmann 2000). Considering the discourse itself both an instrument of control and power and of the social construction of reality (van Leeuwen, 1993 in Wodak et al. 2001, p.9), the aim is to look at power and resistance in environmental migration discourses in order to illuminate if and how language keeps certain power relations in place or challenges them (Parker, 2004, p. 90). Further Parker (Ibid.) argues that 'discourse' can be treated as the organization of language into certain kinds of social bonds, and each bond includes certain kinds of people and excludes others. Here we can see how discourse functions ideologically, framing a version of the world in a particular way, for example, a discourse of heterosexuality defines what is deviant, a medical discourse defines what is sick and a dominant patriotic discourse defines what is alien (Parker, 2004, p. 90). Roland Barthes' (1993) work has shown how certain forms of 'speech', in images as well as in written form, reinforce the message that 'this is the way the world is', leading to forms of 'common sense' or 'taken for granted' knowledge. Applying this logic to the discourse around migration, shrinking areas and welcoming spaces enables us to unravel some of the ideologies underpinning it.

A particular characteristic of these last years is the obsession with immigration, even in the case of a radical reduction in arrivals. The “migration crisis”, instrumentally constructed by politicians and media which benefit from it, feeds on the fears of citizens, strengthens them and presumes to provide simple (static) answers. In fact, the strategies of representation and discursive practises conveyed by the mediatic, and political rhetoric describe migration as a perpetual emergency, as a cyclical phenomenon (Vaughan-Williams, 2015; Musarò, 2017) that must be managed in terms of “crisis”, often represented by boats trying to reach an increasingly distant Europe. In the last years, this crisis has been strengthened by the fears connected to the health crisis due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Often supporting the image of migrants coming to Europe as bearers of the disease, the pandemic has seen an intensification of controls in the European countries as well as around Europe’s borders, legitimising further borders externalisations and, in the Italian case, the born of quarantine-ships (Giacomelli and Walker, 2022). The media and their imaginary play a key role in this process. Media have an important role in the “social construction of reality” (Bourdieu, 1980) and “otherness”, in influencing political attitudes and in framing public debates towards migration and asylum. Thus, the negative portraits of migration influence public opinion as the gap between perceptions of the number of migrants within a country and their actual presence shows. In a context where freedom of movement becomes the main factor of social stratification (Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013; Bauman, 2016), the negative representations of migrants depict them as unwelcome “invaders” (Albahari, 2015), crystallising power imbalances and promoting a rhetoric of passivity (Ahmed, 2014). Images (and imaginaries) that dehumanise migrants, helping to legitimise the imperialist gaze of those who have established the rules of the game of mobility (Mirzoeff, 2011). If not criminalised, the narratives which propose a different vision of migrant and asylum seekers convey an idea of solidarity typical of the “ironic spectator” (Chouliaraki, 2012), namely a form of solidarity more based on the body and eyes of who is helping rather than on the conditions that have led to power imbalances. It is therefore required to enhance an alternative vision of solidarity, no longer based on compassion, capable of recognizing the other as a human being and unveiling the harsh oppressive conditions of the global and local structures of injustice.

Despite the political and mediatic construction of the “migrant crisis”, its consequences are real, such as the dehumanisation of migrants and asylum seekers, the legitimisation of unequal power relations or emerging forms of motility (Sheller, 2018). Migrants are dehumanised and presented under the same conceptual umbrella that simplifies the complexity of the migration phenomenon to a wider audience. Words such as “invasion”, “migratory crisis”, “sans-papiers”, “illegal immigrants” thus erase the plurality of personal paths and motivations that every year lead hundreds of thousands of people to leave their country to try to reach a (not always) welcoming Europe.

The representation of the migration phenomenon is often influenced by the dynamics of “agenda setting” (Bentivegna, Boccia Artieri, 2019; Colombo, Gili 2012) and has become one of the most discussed themes in both mass and digital media (Marini, Gerli, 2017). This refers to a specific narrative for which migration is not handled as a structural phenomenon, but as a conjunctural one. Terms such as “migration or refugee crisis” or “migration or refugee emergency” as well as “big wave of refugees and non-EU citizens” continue to define the daily lives of individuals without the possibility of investigating the causes and the real dynamics underlying their movement. A movement that is a state of fact, a natural phenomenon that has always characterized the history of humankind, but whose definition is primarily political. And it often results from a media logic that represents newcomers without any historical or political framework, while the issue of irregular migration flows is construed as a “tragic game of fate” (Musarò, Parmiggiani, 2014).

A fear of the Other which gradually transforms into a “fobocracy” (Di Cesare, 2020), controlled by the idea of the “strangers at our doors” (Bauman, 2016). Moreover, this panic scenario has been supported by specific political decisions such as the massive investment in border control and made bilateral agreements for externalisation of borders (the EU-Turkey agreement in March 2016 and the Memorandum of Understanding between Italy and Libya in February 2017, ratified in 2020). The “migration crisis”, is presented only as a political problem to be solved, often avoiding any forms of reflection on the geopolitical and economic aspects which contribute to human mobility.

As the Third Report of the “Carta di Roma” association stated (2015: 34-35), the binomial formula migrant = threat relies on three kinds of fears. The first, concerns the narratives which depict migrants and refugees as a threat to security and public order: this is the frame in which migrants are narrated and presented as violent, as the cause of greater insecurity in cities, as disturbing the peace in towns and cities, as possible terrorists, as carriers of disease, as incapable of respecting the rules of civil coexistence, as ‘invaders’ of public spaces citizens. The second represents migrants and refugees as a threat to work and the economy, portraying them as people who take work away from Europeans, who benefit from the welfare system and “abusively” use health and social services and public services to the detriment of European citizens. Third, the narratives presenting migrants and refugees as a threat to culture, identity and religion, where they are staged as cultural colonisers, as hostile to forms of integration, as bearers of religious dictates incompatible with the Catholic one, as bearers of irreconcilable habits and lifestyles, supported by discourses such as: “we are no longer masters in our own house”. To these categories, we would add a fourth one: the one that depicts migrants and refugees not only as bearers of incompatible lifestyles, but also as bearers of diseases: a rhetoric which showed its first signs during the Ebola crisis in 2014 but has reached its apotheosis with the Covid-19 outbreak.

In the last decades, many projects were developed to fight against these distorted representations. #CiakmigrAction, for example, is a European project co-financed by the European Union’s Asylum Immigration Integration Fund that aims to spread a balanced and less stereotyped narrative of migration, in order to counteract the increase of forms of hatred and intolerance, mistrust

and fear of diversity. Giving voice to young people and migrants, involving journalists and institutions, Ciak MigrACTION builds an action of information and awareness on the positive contribution of migration in European society, with the aim of dismantling prejudices and promoting coexistence and inclusion. Another interesting project financed by European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund is MAX project, whose aim is to change public attitudes towards migrants through training for journalists and the diffusion of several success stories about outstanding achievements and contributions to European society, economy and culture done by migrants. Moreover, other projects directly created by migrants and asylum seekers are growing in number, to support their power "over the discourse" (Holzscheiter, 2005). An example is represented by the project "Are you Syrious", a grassroots movement that proposes daily news from the field, mainly for volunteers and refugees on the route, but also for journalists and other parties, becoming a transformative tool to affirm new perspectives that comes from those subjects who usually do not have a voice (Couldry, 2010).

Understood as an empirical conceptual category, “shrinking areas” allow us to describe regions that share both demographic and economic shrinkage, as effect of a broader structural crisis of peripheralisation of rural areas compared to urban ones (ESPON, 2020).

In line with an extremely broad interpretation of the afferent territories as a function of different national, regional and local contexts, also a variety of thematic approaches emerges from the Countries’ analyses on the shrinking areas’ media coverage, according to the socio-economic dynamics that characterise the areas.

Furthermore, reflecting the greater attention given to the phenomenon of urban shrinkage in research and policy agendas and the lesser attention given to rural shrinkage, the under-representation of the phenomenon is also evident in terms of media coverage – mainly at the national scale and more narrowly at the local scale, which is directly affected by the phenomenon.

Similarly, an under-representation of welcoming initiatives in shrinking areas emerges from media analyses. Although several European projects have been financed to investigate the potential relationship between the emplacement of people with a migration background and rurality as central social and political areas for the future of the European Union (e.g. MATILDE, Share-Sira, Welcoming Spaces, Mimmy) and although more attention to the topic is evident in the European sociological studies, a disconnection between welcoming initiatives, society and narratives still emerges.

Defined as a meeting place between the migrant world and local contexts in Europe's depopulating rural regions, this category allows us to investigate what factors have enabled the revitalisation of shrinking areas while offering a space for migrants' integration. As a result of migratory pressure, and in particular after the peaks of arrivals in 2015-2016, many European governments started to create reception facilities in remote areas, entrusting a significant number of rural municipalities with the settlement of asylum seekers and refugees (Dematteis et al., 2018). These are small towns and villages that have compensated for the demographic decline by attracting migrants and at the same time have experimented with some processes of social innovation and maintained some services (e.g.: school, post office, pharmacy) that in time, due to depopulation, would have been destined to close. The increase in the resident population also allowed local businesses as well as owners of empty houses new opportunities. The new presence of inhabitants has also often allowed the launch of territorial recovery and regeneration projects, investing in processes aimed at improving tourism, the creation of cooperatives - made up of newcomers and locals - to preserve the environment and the traditional landscape, often by reviving traditional agricultural and craft practices. The social innovation processes observed were mainly the result of top-down dynamics through asylum seeker relocation policies adopted during the 'European refugee crisis', which sometimes created disruptive events in local communities (Ponzo, 2020). The observation of this new rurality made it possible to observe that beyond the narrative of migrants as a threat, it is possible to promote welcoming attitudes in remote areas, as some successful cases demonstrate.

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ITALY

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Introduction

“In these ten years the ‘fear machine,’ that mechanism that repeats itself, with an always identical sequence that begins in spring with the alarm of ‘one million people ready to leave from the coasts of Libya’ and continues with the counting of arrivals in Italian ports, has endured and consolidated.” Thus Valerio Cataldi, president of the Rome Charter Association, in the introduction to the 10th Rome Charter Report “News from the Front,” edited by the Pavia Observatory. “However, the analysis of this last year of information on migration, refugees, and asylum seekers, reveals that there is a parallel track on which solidarity for the fleeing Ukrainian people and the growing hostility toward the fleeing peoples arriving from the Mediterranean run. A dual narrative that shows how pervasive political propaganda is in Italian journalism. The revolution in journalistic language on migration must wait for more,” Cataldi reiterates.

If before it was the role of illegal immigrants that was negative, [during COVID-19] the negative connotation of the infected, of the infector, always attributed to the migrant, has been added and now the year 2022 marks a further decline in attention to the topic of migration, both in prime-time news and on the front pages of major newspapers. The war in Ukraine and the flow of Ukrainian refugees to European countries are at the center of the migration agenda negative mediatization of the NGOs search and rescue vessels returned. Alongside this change of narrative that has characterised past years, 2022 experienced also a reduction of news related to immigration, with 14% decline compared to the first 10 months of 2021 and the lowest level of coverage achieved since 2014. “The decline in attention appears to be due to the disruption of news agendas, long dominated by the war in Ukraine. The feeling of insecurity toward immigrants, detected in November, rises 5 points from the previous year and is 32 percent,” points out Giuseppe Milazzo, researcher at the Pavia Observatory. During 2022, there are 563 articles on the front pages of newspapers dedicated to the topic of migration, further decreasing from last year (17% less): this is the lowest figure in the last 8 years (from 2015 to 2022).

Moreover, the migration agenda in 2022 sees major changes in the weight of the various thematic categories. The theme Reception touches its highest level ever (48 percent), while the usually prevalent categories, Migration Flows (23 percent) and Crime/Security (15 percent), shrink, touching their all-time lows. The item Society and Culture (12 percent) remains in line with the previous year, while the items Terrorism, Economy and Labor and Covid-19 almost disappear from the agenda, placing below 1 percent. The cause of this thematic distortion is the treatment of the refugee problem in relation to the Ukrainian crisis, which focused precisely on Reception. Without this news,

the distribution would accentuate the trends of previous years: marginality of Reception, Migration Flows leading the ranking, and Crime close to the highest level reached in 2017. In 2022 there is a significant decline in news stories containing statements by political subjects (20 percent, down from 35 percent in 2021). This presence is more rarefied in news about the arrival of Ukrainian refugees, where it loses space in favor of other subjects and protagonists, while it becomes much more incisive, up to the usual percentages, in conjunction with the summer landings and during the election campaign. There is an overall decline in alarmist tones in the news about the hospitality reserved for refugees arriving from Ukraine; news that testifies to a collective willingness to help and tells of a reception machine working effectively. In contrast, anxious tones remain in the news about the summer and fall landings and crime incidents. The feeling of insecurity toward immigrants, detected in November, rises 5 points over the previous year and is 32 percent.

In order to see how the narratives about migration have changed in Italy during these last years, we propose a brief summary mainly based on the outcomes of the reports of the “Carta di Roma” association, published from 2012 every year or, sometimes, every two years, to observe the representations and discourses produced by Italian media, focusing on newspaper articles, news and, more recently, social media.

The first year of this study, 2012 experienced a significant increase, compared to previous studies, in the news on immigration and asylum related to society; in particular, those concerning demographic issues, work, the economy and also education. On the front pages of the main Italian newspapers, the weight of the news, when it comes to immigration, and of the crime news in particular, is therefore decreasing. On the front pages of the newspapers there is more discussion of social changes related to the presence of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Italy and therefore the discussion on *ius soli* is also prevalent in the political debate. In 32% of the total news items analysed, one (or more) nationalities are mentioned on the front page. The practice of referring to specific nationalities concerns in particular 59% of crime news. Of the news items sampled, 53% were mainly about men, 30% about both genders in a balanced manner and only 17% were mainly about women.

In 2013, the issues of immigration and racism were repeatedly central to the political debate and to important news episodes. In the same year the news on these issues increased considerably: coverage has almost doubled in the newspapers under research (in 3 of the 4 newspapers examined it has more than doubled). This increase seems to be mainly due to the presence of some stories that have been followed for a long time; among these, the shipwreck of 3rd October 2013, the news about the then minister Cécile Kyenge and the racial insults she suffered and the scandal of the Centre for Identification and Expulsion in Lampedusa. The incidence of news about legislation and administration (+31%), migratory flows (+9%) and racism (+8%) has particularly increased, while the incidence of news about society (-13%) and crime (-10%) has decreased. The 2013 snapshot reconfirms a clear prevalence of open positions over closed ones expressed in the articles analysed, which represent 76% of cases, a slight increase on the previous year. It is interesting to note that these “positive” representations correspond

in most cases to a passive portrayal of the migrant: migration suffered because of extreme conditions, where migrants are portrayed as victims, administrative or social initiatives that migrants suffer (or of which they are beneficiaries) in a passive way. Less space is given to the media's representation of migrants in an active key: the idea of the migration project, for example, or the migrants' personal activism. Talk shows also have a dramatising style, which in some cases borders on pietism, defining migrants from time to time as 'refugees', 'desperate', 'poor people' and generally maintaining a tone of empathy and participation in which migrants are presented essentially as victims.

2015 represents a turn in the narratives about migration: never before so many articles, tv news and talks were focusing on immigration in Italy as in 2015. The figures are impressive: the number of front-page headlines that the major Italian newspapers dedicated to the subject increased from 70 to 180 per cent and that the number of reports on television news quadrupled. 2015 was a significant year for the visibility of the immigration issue: as many as 1,452 headlines on the front pages in the first 10 months. During the course of the year, on certain days and on the occasion of specific events (tragedies at sea, migrant arrivals in Ventimiglia, the presence of migrants and refugees in the cities, the death of little Aylan on the Turkish coast), the newspapers dedicate - on average per day - 4/5 headlines on their front pages. The tone of the headlines is alarmist in 47% of cases: the management of reception is the most communicated topic (55%), while there has been an increase in the visibility of the binomial terrorism-immigration. The narrative emphasis on emergencies is mainly related to migratory flows, reception in Italian cities, possible health risks and the fear of terrorist attacks.

While in 2015 the main topics were related to sea tragedies, serious crime, cyclical increases in arrivals (the "invasions") and, often as an emergency, coinciding with election campaigns, in 2016 migration is now discussed on a continuous basis. In this respect, 2016 is the year of the "great immigration" in the media: the frequency of articles and headlines on the subject has shown an increase of over 10%, compared to 2015, a year that had already marked a peak in visibility, 100 times higher than 2013. It has a "structural" visibility also because of its centrality in the Italian and European political agenda: in half of the headlines there is an explicit reference to Italian and/or European leaders and political representatives. The most discussed topics are those of reception (with 34%), tales of travel (24%): walls and borders on the one hand, landings and shipwrecks on the other, and there is a significant increase in social and cultural issues (at 21%, 3 times more than in 2015): spread of racist and xenophobic instances, tales of cultural, identity and religious differences, habits and lifestyles "theirs" different from "ours". The visibility of the migratory phenomenon is also very high in the television news, 2,954 news items in 10 months. The first topic on the immigration agenda is that of reception (36%) followed by the chronicle of migratory flows (27%) and crime and security (24%), three topics that occupy almost 90% of the overall agenda.

In 2017 there was a change in the narrative frame compared to 2016: many issues at the heart of the migration agenda were framed in a problematic way. The accusation of NGOs of - alleged - collusion with human traffickers, the difficulty in managing the ever-increasing migratory flows, the issue

of citizenship (*ius soli*), egregious criminal cases, evictions and riots in reception centres occupy the front pages of the local and national press and the opening headlines of the news. These stories reinforce negative frames, where the presence of migrants and refugees is associated with 'invasion', suspicion, threat to citizens' security, degradation and disease. The migration phenomenon confirms its centrality on the front pages of newspapers, although slightly lower than in 2016: in 2017, 1,087 news items dedicated to the theme of immigration were on the front pages of the newspapers analysed, 29% less than in the previous year. What makes the news in 2017: the management of migratory flows (first item in 2017 with 44%) and crime and security (third item with 16%). Alarmist tones increase: from 27% in 2016 to 43% this year. In 2017, news related to the migratory phenomenon in the news increased: 3,713 news items in 10 months, an increase (+26%) compared to 2016; with an average of 12 news items per day. The suspicion about the action of operators - especially that of NGOs - envelops the whole story on sea rescue. In a short space of time, one of the few dimensions of immigration that is extraneous to criticism and accusation, the rescue of migrants, instead produces mistrust and feelings of closure towards arrivals.

In 2018, instead, there was a reduction in the amount of news devoted to immigration in the print media compared to previous years: there was, in 2018, a 17% drop in news compared to 2017 and a 38% drop compared to 2015. Despite this, the amount of news on the front pages of newspapers in 2018 remains significant: 834 headlines across five titles in ten months means an average of 83 immigration headlines per month. The agenda of immigration issues shows a gradual decrease in the reception item, from 54% in 2015 to 17% in 2018, and a simultaneous increase in the migratory flows item, which rises from 23% in 2015 to 47% in 2018. The visibility of the phenomenon in TV news also remains very high: 4,068 news items in 10 months, 300 more than in the same period of 2017. Furthermore, 43% of news items have an explicit reference to a political statement or action. Similar percentages are found for example in the coverage of economic issues such as the presentation of the budget law (where politics is central in 57% of the reports). The first topic on the immigration agenda concerns migratory flows (38%), followed by crime and security (32%), two topics that occupy, alone, 70% of the overall agenda. This is followed by the topic of reception and society and culture.

In 2019, immigration was again a central theme in Italian news, with a 30 per cent increase over the previous year in the number of news items dedicated to the issue on the front pages of newspapers; in prime-time news, the peaks of attention were among the highest in the last five years. The most important attention was once again given to news on the management of migratory flows (first item with 51 per cent of the news) and to news on society and culture (second item with 23 per cent, five points higher than in recent years). "This is counterbalanced by the contraction of the theme of reception, which halved compared to the previous year (placing fourth with 9% of attention). Moreover, one of the negative aspects of the media's approach to the migration issue continues to be the passive portrayal of people of foreign origin, which only becomes active in the case of crimes and news cases.

In 2020 and, in general during COVID-19 times, in prime-time news

programmes, unlike in previous years, the attention has been discontinuous: in the first ten months of 2020 the news broadcast is half that of the last two years.

Analysing several of the most notable Italian online news media, Giacomelli, Musarò and Parmiggiani (2020) scrutinized how the Covid-19 pandemic and the fear of 'the other' has shifted migration discourses, shedding light on how during the pandemic the news has been polarized: on one side, the border closure due to the connection between migration and illness; on the other, the regularization of migrants working in informal economy.

However, looking at the headlines in the national and local press, newspapers and magazines, the most relevant dimension is that of alarm, especially related to the stigmatisation of migrants as a vehicle of contagion remains. Migrants are identified as a means of spreading the virus, and this becomes a rhetorical propaganda tool that distracting public opinion from real political and social problems we had to face in front of the health but also economic and environmental crisis of 2020. In the year of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in fact, 13% of the headlines in the press on migrants are located in the health alert frame. Similarly, in Facebook, the second most important tool for spreading news (31.4% of Italians use it to get information), the emergency and alarmist language of some newspapers in particular contributes to creating a climate of threat and fear. Fear, emergency and control are, therefore, the main topics of the Italian mediatic narratives in 2020, unifying an infocracy with "fobocracy" (Di Cesare, 2020). In line with the previous year, immigrants, migrants and refugees have a voice in 7% of services, completely in line with the surveys of recent years.

The Charter of Rome's analyses carried out in recent years on the presence of immigration in the media and in information draw a path that moves along different themes, and which essentially follow a trend from victimisation to criminalisation of the migrant, who is now identified as an enemy or an infector. From pity to fear, without detecting a direct and close relationship with the evolution of the phenomenon in quantitative terms. The attitude of the information slips, in a rapid and linear way, from "pity" towards the suffering of "others", to outright intolerance. The reports produced by the Charter of Rome over the years show us how much the narratives towards "immigration" have changed. While the 'demand for security' (from crime, invasion and, today, the possibility of contagion from outside) has become the most relevant imaginary. Migrants, therefore, are at the centre of a political confrontation, or rather a clash, as the scapegoats of a system that stopped working several years ago.

In the years analysed, a common thread in the information on the migratory phenomenon is that of the permanent emergency, the lexicon used outlines a framework of "infinite crisis", endemic, which changes over time and spreads from the news to the political debate, within Italy and among European institutions. In 2013, the symbolic word of the year was Lampedusa, the frame of the humanitarian crisis. The symbolic word of the following year, 2014, was Mare nostrum, and the framework expanded to take the form of an unstoppable crisis, as threatening as a natural disaster. In 2015, the symbolic word is Europe and the frame takes on the character of a political crisis. The

symbolic word of 2016 is walls, the real and symbolic ones erected at the borders and in the heart of Europe, the frame widens to a systemic crisis of the EU, undermining its founding principles. The symbolic word of 2017 is NGOs, with the genesis of suspicion on humanitarian workers, and the framework becomes a crisis of rejection, also fuelled by heinous cases of crime. In 2018, the symbolic word is Salvini, the protagonist of 865 headlines, and the frame changes into a crisis of values, due to the worsening of the European political confrontation and the disintegration of the shared fabric of community values. In 2020, on the other hand, the health crisis (but not only) highlights the “fear” climate, where migrants are not just enemies but pests.

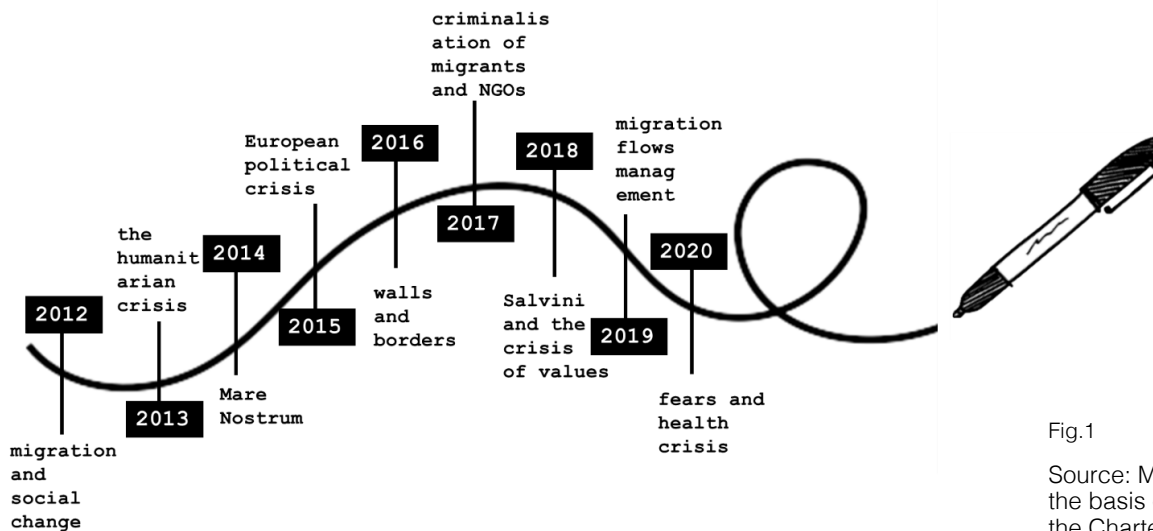


Fig.1

Source: Melissa Moralli, on the basis of the results of the Charter of Rome annual reports.

Taking into consideration *Avvenire*, a newspaper which, according to the analysis conducted by the Carta di Roma Association, is in the Italian context the one that most frequently deals with the issue of migration with a focus on the human dimension, the incidence of the themes “migration,” “reception,” and “reception in inner areas” in online articles was analyzed. The period considered is from January 2021 to May 2022 – a period that is particularly significant as it is characterized by the two global crises, in Afghanistan and Ukraine. Out of a monthly average of 285 articles in the year 2021 and 209 in the year 2022, it appears that the topic of reception is extremely marginal, although there has been an increase in attention since March 2022 as a result of the war in Ukraine. Even more marginal is the theme of reception in inner areas, which appears to be addressed in an “indirect” way: by referring to life stories or the commitment of dioceses or the trial of Mimmo Lucano, former mayor of Riace, a symbol of the reception of migrants in small villages in Italy. It also emerges how reception on a local scale is almost exclusively conveyed by referring to Calabria, a southern region that, on the contrary, is highly marginalized by media and political attention.

Two articles focusing on the relationship between reception and territorial regeneration are of particular interest. The first, from July 2021, explicitly

refers to the situation in Calabria, which is read as a marginalized territory in which hospitality does not attract media attention even though it is a potential revitalization tool for inner areas. In the period considered, this article is the only one in which the two themes are related to each other. The second article, from May 2022, refers to the birth of a Ukrainian child whose mother had been welcomed in an inner area; it brings together the theme of depopulation with that of welcoming, understanding it as both welcoming oriented to tourists but also to migrants.

RECEPTION: ON A NATIONAL SCALE

Analysis of news on migration, reception and reception in shrinking areas in the newspaper Avvenire's online news archive (January 2021-May 2022)

285: total average number of articles per month in 2021 - 209: total average number of articles per month in 2022

Own elaboration

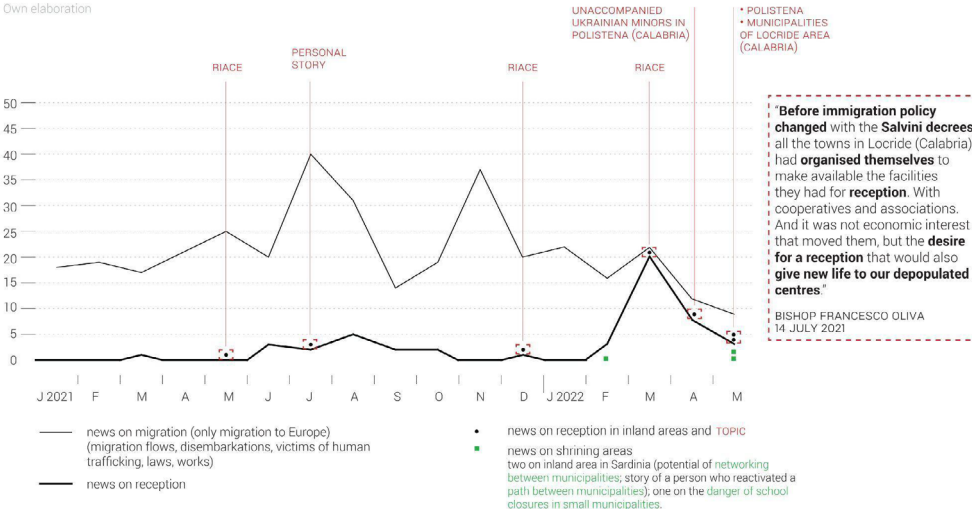


Fig.2

Source: Chiara Davino, on the basis of newspaper Avvenire's online news archive (January 2021-May 2022).

With the aim to challenge the distorted and distorting processes by the media and analyzed on a national scale, in Italy we can find some initiatives aimed at supporting alternative narratives and imaginaries on migration.

Since the end of 2012, for example, the "Associazione Carta di Roma" (Charter of Rome association) has been organising debates and meetings to present the Charter directly in the editorial offices of the main Italian newspapers, combining the information aspect with a first moment of training and awareness-raising on some specific contents. In relation to the awareness-raising meetings, it provides an analysis of negative examples of treatment, together with some good practises to learn directly from practice. Secondly, the association create occasions of direct dialogue and exchange between information operators (peer education) with a participatory approach as a training method. From these experiences, the association draw the first Guidelines for the application of the Rome Charter, a working tool seeking to translate the principles of the code of ethics into practical guidelines for Italian journalists. The guidelines were given to all the speakers and participants of the meetings promoted by both the FNSI and Redattore Sociale as a basis for reflection and inspiration for the seminars. This document attempted to bring the paper into practice and into the daily treatment of the topic, by providing brief analyses of the problematic issues of information on immigration, but

also practical indications to avoid the most incorrect and inappropriate behaviours. The latest guidelines date from 2018, and include tools useful to checking facts, consulting experts, using correct and legally accurate terms in the narration of migrations. Thus, they have the added value of providing journalists with the tools to build a collective embankment against the overflow of hate speech and hate acts. The guidelines include four main principles (adopting a correct terminology, safeguarding the identity of those migrants and asylum seekers who want to speak, avoiding spreading inaccurate and simplifying information and consulting experts and organisations in order to have a comprehensive idea on the phenomenon), a “diversity checklist” for the journalists and a glossary annex with the main terms related to migration.



Fig.3

Source: Chiara Davino, on the Source: Associazione Carta di Roma. Diversity checklist.

Another interesting example is represented by “Black Post – L’informazione nero su bianco” (Black on white information). Here, black on white means sharpness and precision, capable of overturning the point of view and changing the way we look at reality. As the website states, in this initiative

“the foreigner who, from being the object of information, becomes an active subject of communication; the aim is not to ‘talk about them’, but to make them talk and describe life and the world around them, for better or for worse”. This editorial project was created to amplify the voice of those who are too often denigrated, discriminated against and fail to express their point of view, with a different perspective. Thus, the project aims at supporting other projects of solidarity that have been activated in Italy, in contrast to the worrying xenophobic social drift, often in line with unjust Italian immigration policies about mobility, work and reception, through the voice of those who are the first subjects of these processes. Indeed, the editorial staff is made up exclusively of first- or second-generation immigrants, collaborating with journalists, professors and students. In this sense, the project does not only offer the opportunity to overturn the narrative, but also to create an example of inclusion and collaboration within the mediatic field, as well as to train the journalists of tomorrow. As reported in the website, “the idea is to create an editorial publication that is characterised by its original approach and methodological originality and, obviously, by the contents treated from another’ point of view, interpreted with an unexpected and captivating slant. In short, it is a question of giving back one’s own subjectivity to those who often see it denied, if not banned, so that they can spread it and make it available to those who want to welcome it”.



Fig.4

Source: The Black Post (website).

Narratives on migrants at the local level

Narratives on migration at the local level mostly reflect those present in the national media and political discourses reported in the previous section. However, especially in some years and in the case of specific issues, there are some signs of divergence. For example, between national and local

narratives there is often a connotation of discourse that is divergent and complementary at the same time, which goes beyond cultural and ideological orientation. In fact, the local news, even within a divergent political-cultural orientation, organise their semantics around other argumentative dimensions, closer to the territory. This shows the relative autonomy of the local public discourse, which, however, produces different cognitive effects with respect to what happens in the territory.

Even with regard to specific issues, we can note some divergent aspects from 2012. In 2012, for example, although the national press experienced a significant increase in the number of news linked to immigration and asylum in the society (e.g.: demographic issues, work, economy and education) and the news stories on the front pages of the main Italian newspapers highly decreased, the story and crime news continued to have a strong impact in local newspapers, where it reaches high percentages (50% of all news related to migration and asylum in *Corriere del Veneto*, *Giornale di Sicilia*, *Il Messaggero*, *Resto del Carlino*, *Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno*, 60% in the latter). In 2017, too, there are some differences between national and local press. If the first pays more attention to political confrontation, for a political and ideological positioning and, on occasion, unscrupulous headlines, the local press is characterised by a language that is more in keeping with the management of reception on the territory, the problems of distributing refugees in the municipalities, and for a high attention to criminal events with migrants as perpetrators or victims of crime. More characteristic features of the local press are therefore related to the management of migrants on the territory, with protagonist places and subjects directly responsible or variously involved in reception. The local press is also associated with semantics related to cultural confrontation and clash, terrorism alarm and common crime. To sum up, therefore, in 2017 the national press focuses more on strictly political issues, international agreements, confrontation with Europe, while the local press reflects the encounter on the territory, integration measures, forms of cohabitation and rejection.

The narratives that are most widespread in the Italian media with respect to migration at the local level are mainly three.

The first concerns the theme of the reception of migrants within Italian territory. The media boom of this type of narrative occurred between 2015 and 2016. In these years, the common thread of the narrative of the migratory phenomenon is politics, which declined at the local level with the issues related to the local management of reception. In particular, in 2015 and 2016, two levels intersect: the supranational (European and international) and the local, which overlap in reality and communication. At the local level, migrants are present in news concerning reception, i.e. in relation to gathering centres, to requests for health and economic assistance, but also to transit status, to the final destinations of their migration. More negative than the previous contexts are those of refusal, where ordinary citizens or local politicians express distrust and opinions against reception, or promote explicit actions of refusal, as in the case of barricades against the arrival of migrants. The other narrative frame in which migrants have sometimes been questioned is that of degradation, in this case as direct witnesses or - despite themselves - as agents of degradation

itself. Among the major images linked to this frame of discomfort, there are urban degradation, barracks in stations and in border areas, and tensions in larger reception centres. This theme remains the most represented in 2017, gathering 49% of the headwords of the entire media production. The language of this set evokes the conceptual sphere of reception and management of migratory flows on the national and European territory. The attention to the local dimension also emerges from the five most characteristic words of this topic: migrant, refugee, reception, mayor, municipality. The places linked to this theme also reflect the local dimension more than the national one, with the territories being the narrative theatre of the reception of migrants. The local press contributes predominantly to the lexicon of this semantic class (Corriere del Veneto, Corriere di Bologna, Corriere del Mezzogiorno, Messaggero Gorizia, Messaggero Veneto, Messaggero Pordenone, Repubblica Genova, Avvenire Milano, etc.). However, at a local level, there are some particularly criticalities connected to the territory: problems related to reception, integration in schools, health care. The presence of migrants in these titles, in the territory, is associated with a worsening of the living conditions of the “residents”, Italians. Moreover, in the local press there are also negative frames (related to crime and public order) and unnecessary references to ethnic or national origin in the case of crimes. However, these headlines are usually less aggressive and intentional than those found in some national newspapers. On the contrary, in TV news level of reception in the territories is marginal. The implementation of reception policies at a local level entered the media agenda only in mid-October, at the same time as the arrest of the mayor of Riace, Domenico Lucano, symbol of a humanitarian model of reception, for an alleged crime of aiding and abetting illegal immigration. As time goes by, however, the stories of reception in the territories, both the positive ones of efficiency and collaboration between the institutions involved, and the more complex and conflicting ones, progressively make less and less news. In 2018, the theme of coexistence is the second largest cluster and brings together the local dimension of reception with an emphasis on the frictions and tensions caused by the encounter with diversity. The political actors are numerous in this cluster, in particular local administrators in large urban areas, political parties and movements that bear witness to political thematization at local level, local administrators, security forces in charge of managing placements and representatives of the Catholic Church. The organisations most frequently mentioned are those involved in reception (Caritas, Baobab, Coop). The places most frequently mentioned in the lexicon of this cluster are Italian municipalities and regions, demonstrating that the local dimension is the most prominent in the reception issue.

The second theme that is most associated with the local dimension of migration is that of borders. Especially since 2013, following the Lampedusa tragedy, this remains, in general, one of the most important topics in the media representation of migration. However, as already mentioned, we are witnessing a change of perspective on this issue: from assistentialistic rhetoric, we are moving towards a gradual criminalisation of migrants first, and then of NGOs and solidarity organisations. With respect to this theme, the local dimension clearly emerges, especially in relation to what happens

at the extremes of Italy, as in the case of Lampedusa or Ventimiglia. In fact, the places in this thematic cluster reflect the local dimension more than the national one, with the territories being the narrative theatre of the reception of migrants and the crossing of borders. On the one hand, we find the global dimension of the migratory phenomenon, the migratory crisis, the “epochal” flows from the south to the north of the world, the European and international political debate; on the other hand, we find the dynamics of encounter and clash in the territories, linked to the reporting of criminal events, social tensions, episodes of intolerance, but also the management of reception and integration policies. In essence, the lexicon is stripped of global semantic associations associated with the arrival of migrants, the crossing of the Mediterranean and the European political debate, and is enriched by local semantic associations, closer to the territories and the everyday life of people. In 2018, topics concerning Europe and borders become the first cluster, hosting 31% of the lemmas of the entire sample of titles. Distinctive lexical elements of this cluster are the terms of the political confrontation on the management of arrivals, and partly the fears related to the migratory phenomenon, from the point of view of the tightness of European stability and the supposed risks of health contagion. In the background, throughout the year, there are other issues related to migration: the management of migration flows as a crucial point on the political agenda of Italy and other foreign countries, land borders (and the related “encroachments”, for example, of French police into Italian territory) and sea borders (the management of the landings of ships carrying migrants and refugees), and the episodes of racism, which occurred in Italy during 2018. For example, in 2018, the main event in the headlines in April is the anti-immigrant blitz by the French gendarmerie in Bardonecchia, which provokes disagreements between Italy and France over borders and expulsions.

The third frame, but not in order of importance and representativeness, is that related to the labour exploitation of migrants and the gangmaster system. This thematic area includes reports of labour exploitation, particularly in agricultural harvesting areas in Southern Italy. Migrants are represented in this case as witnesses of a discriminatory condition, but also as a reserve labour force that accepts poor wages and illegal work. Thus, a double narrative remains prevalent with respect to the role of migrants in these episodes of exploitation. On the one hand, the binomial relation between immigrants and crime remains. As a rule, the interviewees are not the perpetrators, but rather people who, because of their real or presumed membership of the same community, nationality or ethnic group as the offender, represent - in a dangerous game of stereotypes and generalisations - the potential faces of crime. The second type of narrative concerns the cases in which “foreigners” - migrants and refugees - are protagonists as victims and not perpetrators. In 2018, however, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have a voice in the news in 16% of immigration-related reports. This is in contrast to the findings of previous years (7% in 2017). They are mainly protagonists in two thematic contexts: racist attacks and assaults, and news related to corporalism and labour exploitation. Very often, it is the news stories and crime news that become an ‘opportunity’ to talk about all the exploited immigrants, themselves victims of crimes and abuses carried out by criminal organisations. In 2018, for example, the

road accident that cost the lives of twelve people, all agricultural workers in the countryside of Foggia, became an opportunity to reiterate the urgency of measures to fight against forced labour and the exploitation of foreign labourers. A similar attention to the topic was shown in 2020, when a migrant in Apulia died burnt inside a shack. Recently, the issue of labour exploitation has been accompanied by alarmist tones. The concentrations of migrants around these places have been described, in some cases, as possible areas of super contagious infection of the virus, capable of infecting the nearby inhabitants or, in some cases, the nearby tourist areas. This news is accompanied by a vast production of comments on social networks. One of the most commented posts of 2020, for example, was the one in which Roberto Saviano attacked Salvini and the visit of the Italian leader to Mondragone to the former Cirio buildings inhabited by a community of Bulgarian citizens and where there was an outbreak of Covid, followed by clashes between Italians and foreigners. In his post, Saviano argued that 'the virus spreads where rights are lacking and those who block rights are responsible'. In other posts on the subject of immigration-virus Saviano also returns to Mondragone on the essential rights not guaranteed for migrants, criticising the management policies of the immigration phenomenon, exploitation and anti-migrant propaganda. Moreover, the issue of labour rights and the exploitation of foreign workers, especially in agriculture, remains one of the main thematic cores dealt with in 2020, along with landings and the health and pandemic issue.

In these last years, some initiatives aimed at challenging stigmatising discourses on migration and mobility from local newspapers have been developed. In the first six months of 2012, for example, the FNSI (National Federation of Italian Press), in cooperation with UNAR (National Office for Racial Antidiscrimination), organised a series of meetings in the southern regions of Italy (Puglia, Calabria, Campania and Sicily) to raise awareness of the Rome Charter and to develop guidelines for its application together with local journalists. The meetings had both informative and awareness-raising objectives on immigration and asylum issues for local press journalists, sharing objectives with press associations and orders but also with local institutions and migrants' rights associations operating in the territory. In order to stimulate the participation and interest of journalists, the public meetings were followed by a visit to some reception centres for refugees or asylum seekers preceded by ad hoc practical training by experts on the theme of representation of this category of people with information on their condition/status in Italy also through the dissemination of the relevant legislation. The visits were organised in the presence of high-level institutional interlocutors (presidents of regions or mayors) and accompanied by cultural mediators who joined the journalists for interviews and the collection of information from the centre guests.

An example which includes a more active participation of migrants in the creation of local news is provided by the AMAD association (Associazione Multiethnica Antirazzista Donne) (Multiethnic and Antiracist Women Association), based in Ancona and active since 2018. The aim of the association is to build positive relationships, to promote the rights of self-determination for all, to fight discrimination of all kinds, xenophobia and racism. Drawing

upon these objectives, the association started to collaborate with seventeen refugee women to work at the level of news-making in local television. In particular, the group designed and proposed a talk show based on the story of the individual experiences of refugees, accompanied by debates with representatives of the local community, journalists and experts in the field of migration. Moreover, the project was recently transformed in a web edition “Il Mondo a Casa Nostra” (The World at Our Home), an in-house editorial office presenting digital discussion meetings on the most topical issues with the involvement of experts.

Focusing on the media representation of “migration,” “reception,” and “reception in inner areas” on a local scale, we analyzed online articles published between January 2021 and May 2022 by the online magazine “Il Reggino,” whose news basin covers the province of Reggio Calabria and the region of Calabria. We focused on this geographic area because as emerged from the data analysis of Avvenire, Calabria emerged as the main area of investigation on a national scale. In addition, one of the selected welcoming initiatives is located in the province of Reggio Calabria (the municipality of Camini).

The analysis put together the data collected in the “news” and the “society” categories of the “Il Reggino” archive. In the first section, the news on migration is mainly about disembarkations and their management, caporalato,¹ and the housing conditions of workers under caporalato. Reception is completely absent, except for some news about the reception of the Ukrainian population following the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Instead, reception is predominantly present in the “society” section.

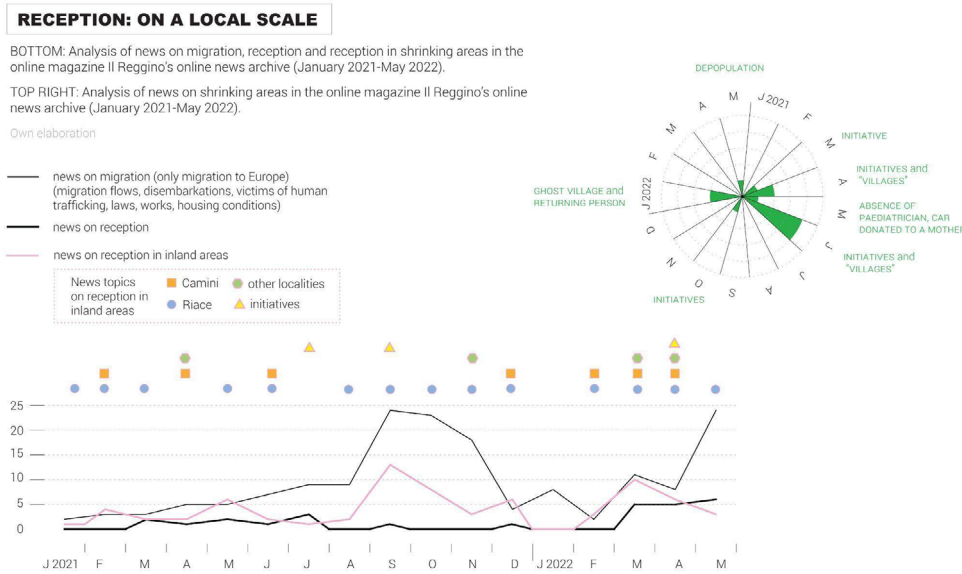
Reception in the inner areas is narrated mainly through the framework of the trial of Mimmo Lucano. Monthly, there is news on solidarity with Mimmo Lucano and the Riace model, on the initiatives conducted in Riace and Camini, on the welcoming model called “Camini”, and on other localities and initiatives (those same localities that had already been surveyed on a national scale by Avvenire). It is interesting to note that in a year and a half, there is only one article related to a protest by the so-called “local” population against the reception of migrants (an extremely interesting fact when compared with the predominantly xenophobic climate emerging nationwide).

1

In Italy, “caporalato” takes the name of any “form of labor exploitation that affects different productive sectors” but that “manifests itself with particular strength and pervasiveness in the agricultural sector” (Camera dei Deputati, 2021).

Fig.5

Source: Chiara Davino, on the basis of newspaper Avvenire's online news archive (January 2021-May 2022).



Narratives on Italian shrinking regions

The dichotomous representation after the Second World War

The dualism extended to a national scale between dynamic urban centres and peripheral urban and territorial realities – triggered by the country's uneven economic growth after the Second World War – was for a long time ignored in function of the dominant, but nevertheless simplified, representation centred on the dualism between the macro-regions of Northern and Southern Italy (Cerosimo, Donzelli, 2020). To this representation has also been added a narrative centred on the dichotomy, also moral, between the modern and developed North and the traditional, underdeveloped and “amoral” South (Cerosimo, Ferrara, Nisticò, 2021). An interpretative frame that has also influenced the spatial reading of the relationship between city and country and between plain and mountain, ascribing urban and plain realities to the “modern” and rural and mountain realities (those nowadays defined as “internal”) to the “traditional”. It was precisely the industrial modernisation of the post-war period, therefore, that relegated “tradition to a compensatory function, electing the ‘local’ to the realm of fixity and nostalgia, at the same time fuelling the mythification of rurality and the feeling of exclusion” (Varotto, 2017: 145). Parallel to the strategic, political and cultural disinvestment (Carrosio, 2019), a process of eviction of the complexity proper to the internal territories and of symbolic and cultural filling in according to the needs and

logics of urban² centralities alien to these same territories has been defined (Varotto, 2020); an urban-centric storytelling that imposes frames of meaning and values and that consequently makes manifest the need for a redistribution of the capacity for expression, even for the territories on the margins (Barbera, De Rossi 2021).

New narratives in the last decade

In the last decade, however, new readings and interpretations (and consequently new narratives) of Italy's internal territory have emerged, capable of overcoming the simplification and territorial flattening resulting from stereotypical representations³ and thus recovering the high diversity of Italy's internal territories – to which the National Strategy for Internal Areas (conceived in 2012 and launched in 2014) also refers in the definition it provides for these territories.⁴ The new narratives focus on the uniqueness of places, opposing the “territorial marketing” that proposes “typification”, product merchandising and the homologating tourist monoculture as the only ways to develop, through methods that are trivialised on the whole, since they are far from a participatory and democratic community process. The end of the tourist image of a territorial format made up of folklore disconnected from cultural bases, improbable traditions and fake genuineness is felt as a primary necessity in order to be able to re-construct narratives and representations that are their own, authentic, in relationships (Stati Generali delle Comunità dell'Appennino, 2014). Unprecedented narratives, therefore, capable of moving towards individual and collective territorial empowerment: through experimental and pilot projects (Caldelli, Tantillo, 2006), also by resorting to visual representations capable of restoring a complexity that would otherwise be ignored, giving direct voice to those who live in and care for the territories in question.

The new idea of territory thus conveyed puts the margin back at the centre of the debate, leaving behind the logic of subsidy in order to consider the internal territories⁵ as a resource both in the imagination and in facts (Stati Generali delle Comunità dell'Appennino, 2014).

Thus, the socio-territorial richness of the so-called “montagna di mezzo” [“middle mountain”] (Varotto, 2020) emerges, identified between 600 and

2

29

The spatial translation of this process of emptying-filling is expressed by Giuseppe Dematteis in the exportation to the mountains of the physical structures proper to the urbs but deprived of the civitas (the cultural and social relations between inhabitants). The presence of apartment blocks in mountainous areas – mountain enclaves of pieces of the city that the city exports – are the representation of this operation (<https://fattidimontagna.it/la-metro-montagna/> last accessed 6 November 2021).

3

On the topic of stereotypical representations of mountain and internal territories, see Issue no. 45 of the Journal “Dislivelli”, *Lo stereotipo non muore mai* [The stereotype never dies], entirely dedicated to the topic and the essay by Melchiorre (2018).

4

The Strategy, in fact, defines internal areas as “rich in important environmental and cultural resources and strongly diversified by nature and as a result of secular processes of anthropisation” (Accordo di Partenariato, 2014).

5

Reference is made here, for example, to the documentary *Piccola Terra* [Small Earth] by Michele Trentini and Marco Romano (2012) which, through the experiences of five inhabitants of the terraced landscapes of the Bassano del Grappa area in Veneto, restores the problematic nature and complexity of certain narratives (such as the one centred on the positivity of “wilderness”, which is very much in vogue today, but which represents the counterpart of modernisation and consequently of the abandonment of certain territories with serious hydrogeological risks in a highly anthropised environmental context such as the Italian one, or the one on the “local” which ignores the presence of new inhabitants with a migrant background and the influence of this part of the population on socio-territorial regeneration). For an in-depth study, see Varotto's (2017) volume.

1500 metres above sea level and located mainly along the Apennine ridge; far from the “showcase-mountain”, as it is interstitial between the horizon of industrious industry in the plains and the high mountains, the narrative of this mountain has not found, in the past, its own precise space of representation – even though it covers a large part of the national territory (over 74% of the national mountain surface); forgotten because its imagery does not overlap either with the well-known national and international imagery of the Alpine landscape and its symbols – the chalet, for example – (Brevini, 2017) or with generic imagery linked to an abstract bucolic ideal (which has come back into vogue, as will be seen below, in the pandemic context).

In 2018, particular media attention was given to internal areas as the subject of the design and theoretical research-action curated by Mario Cucinella for the Italian Pavilion at the 16th International Venice Architecture Biennale. With the intention of activating the territories through a process of narrative construction and an imaginary directly elaborated by the communities (Cucinella, 2018), the project wanted to make manifest both the Italian territorial diversity, exemplifying the national identity itself, and the centuries-old and close correlation, throughout the national territory, between urban space and territory – returned through the image of the archipelago.⁶

In February 2020, the narrative on Italy’s internal areas was relaunched, again at an international level, by the exhibition *Countryside, The Future* curated by Rem Koolhaas and AMO at the Guggenheim Museum in New York (20 February-14 August 2020), and linked to the theme of welcoming migrants and asylum seekers. In the exhibition, aimed at identifying possible future developments for the 98% of the global territory that does not fall within a strictly metropolitan context, the localities of Riace and Camini, in Calabria, are used as European representative places to address the theme of repopulation and socio-territorial regeneration in relation to the arrival of non-European migratory flows. Riace and Camini are therefore defined as “something completely new – African-Arabian villages in the hills of southern Italy – and a rebirth of all-Italian villages as it still haunts the memories of the Italians and the dreams of the tourists” (Maak, 2020: 46), and read by the curators, through the words of the inhabitants, not as places of the past but of the rediscovery of social practices and experimentation through alternative models of life (Maak, 2020).

6

L'altro spazio. Viaggio nelle aree interne dell'Italia [The other space. A journey through Italy's internal areas] is the docufilm made by Marcello Pastonesi, written by Mario Cucinella and produced by Someone and RaiCinema that returns the field research of the “Arcipelago Italia” project, aired on 20 July 2019 on the national broadcasting network Rai Storia.

However, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, a simplistic narrative of internal territories has again become widespread. The “marginality” of internal areas, which until a few years ago was understood as a synonym for unproductive emptiness and immobility, has been reframed by the national media as a positive characteristic, as opposed to the highly infected density of large urban centres, but the “margin” has returned to the centre of public debate in the form of a generic “countryside” to be rediscovered.⁷ In this narrative, not only has the decades-old simplistic and homologating opposition between urban centres and internal areas been reinforced, but the socio-territorial continuum constructed by the succession of medium-sized cities (the provinces), which represents the distinctive feature of the national settlement structure, has also disappeared (Lanzani, 2021): this has consolidated yet another reductive imagery that ascribes the urban to metropolitan cities alone and the mountain to the late nineteenth-century idea of tourist excellence (framed in the frame of well-being and territorial palyground).

During 2020 and 2021, the internal areas were therefore represented by the main national media as “loci amoeni” and the myth of rurality was revived, expressed through the “need to return to the countryside” often described through the tones of a real “exodus” towards the small villages (Marzo, Volpe, 2021). A return, however, framed within the framework of a double emergency, that of the pandemic and that of the depopulation of vast areas of the national territory; and therefore intended as a solution both to deal with the increase in contagions, moving away from urban concentration, and to revitalise the internal areas, contributing to a new development of the Italian territory in the post-pandemic era (the title of an online article published by La Repubblica on 23 April 2020 is explanatory: “La rinascita dei piccoli borghi, il sottosegretario Orrico: ‘Sfruttiamo l'emergenza per accelerare la rinascita’” [“The revival of small villages, the undersecretary Orrico: ‘Let’s exploit the emergency to accelerate the rebirth’”]).⁸ However, the emergency framework, by its very nature, prevents the definition of long-term solutions, and does not take into account the complexity of internal areas.

The return to a generic “countryside” was fuelled by national newspapers through fast and idealised imagery and through the dissemination of proposals by international urban planners and architects in the form of slogans such as “Torniamo nei paesini e lavoriamo da casa” [“Let’s go back to the villages and work from home”]⁹ (proposals which, however, do not seem to take into account the structural conditions of internal areas – just think of the often considerable distance from essential services – and those for which the Pandemic had a catastrophic impact at national level). The association between the countryside and the South of Italy has also taken shape again,

7

During 2020, articles online and in Italian newspapers often spoke of “agriculture 4.0” and of “a return to the countryside far beyond expectations”, not only referring to the “resurgent charge” of new young farmers (<https://greenreport.it/news/urbanistica-e-territorio/agricoltura-4-0-la-carica-dei-2700-contadini-under-35/> last accessed 16 December 2020) but also to new inhabitants who triggered a “real estate boom” through the purchase of houses in the countryside (https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/cresce-30percento-richiesta-case-campagna-ADyeNOI?refresh_ce=1 last accessed 16 December 2020).

8

https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2020/04/23/news/il_rilancio_dei_piccoli_borghi_la_sottosegretario_orrico_sfruttiamo_l_emergenza_per_accelerare_la_rinascita_-254807729/ (last accessed 16 December 2020).

9

“La campagna ci salverà. Addio all’urbanizzazione come modello” [“The countryside will save us. Farewell to urbanisation as a model”], statement by Rem Koolhaas reported by La Repubblica, 8 May 2020; among other statements, those of Stefano Boeri in Masneri M.. (2020). Ripensare l’intensità [Rethinking intensity]. In “Il Foglio”, 14 April 2020; and by Massimiliano Fuksas in Varese L. (2020). Fuksas: “serve un nuovo Umanesimo. Torniamo nei paesini e lavoriamo da casa” [Fuksas: “A new Humanism is needed. Let’s go back to the villages and work from home”]. In “Huffington Post” 31 May 2020.

particularly fuelled by the considerable media coverage of “South-working”, a form of distance working described as sudden return migration to the South by workers who, having the possibility of working remotely, decided to return to their villages of origin during the months of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰

The Pandemic context has revived dichotomous representations and imagery and territorial polarisations that we have been trying to abandon for some time. In brief, it can be seen that the narrative on internal areas is still not very consolidated, since it is divided between the high awareness and deep knowledge of those who live and have worked in and on these areas for years, and the great resonance of the standardising simplification conveyed by the national media.

Referring to the data deduced from the analysis of the *Avvenire* magazine’s online articles in the January 2021-May 2022 period, previously discussed, it emerges how the references to inner areas in this time frame are marginal: only three articles concentrated between February and May 2022. They particularly refer to Sardinia, another region extremely marginalized in the public and political debate. The three articles discuss the need for and potential of networking among small municipalities and the danger represented for these same contexts by the closure of schools, read as a civic presidium (Fig. 2).

Referring instead to the data collected from the analysis of online articles in the newspaper *Il Reggino* over the same period, it emerges how the topic of inland areas even on a local scale is addressed only sporadically (the peak of 4 articles in one month in June 2021 is only once touched upon). However, “inner areas” is not mentioned explicitly in any case; instead, generic references are made to depopulation, lack of services, abandonment, or initiatives related to the revitalization of villages. (Fig. 5– top right graph).

10

<https://www.cliclavoro.gov.it/primo-piano/Pagine/Il-south-working-un-opportunita-per-il-futuro-del-Sud.aspx> (last accessed 16 December 2020).

Zooming on narratives on Italian Welcoming Spaces

If the narratives on migration in local contexts are mainly focused on the three levels of the reception system, borders and exploitation of migrants in some economic sectors, it is interesting to observe how narratives are influenced and influence the presence of welcoming spaces in rural and mountain areas. The results contained in this section are prevalently deriving from research on the discourses related to the newspaper articles (press or online) related to the Italian initiatives selected within the Welcoming Spaces projects, as well as on the data collected during the focused ethnography conducted during fieldwork. In particular, the newspaper articles were divided into local, national and international, in order to see possible similarities and diversities

regarding different kinds of press. In total, 123 local, national and international newspaper articles have been collected. In this section, we will present some first insights that will be further developed in WP4.

Breno and the K-Pax experience

K-Pax is one of the few initiatives selected for the Italian study on Welcoming Spaces to have collected the material produced in relation to this experience in a special section, public and accessible to anyone within the cooperative's own site (<https://www.k-pax.eu/comunicazione/rassegna-stampa/>). This attention to the mediatic dimension, therefore, provides a greater possibility of analysis of the narratives on K-Pax and the activities carried out by the cooperative, and the possibility of having collected so much media material both at a local and national level. In total, there are 52 articles that have been examined at the local level, from 2011 to 2020. In general, a change in narratives is evident. The discursive frames, in fact, have shifted from a climate of tension related to protests over the unsuitable reception of migrants, to the proposal of a model of widespread reception and, later, the communication of the cooperative's activities in terms of reception and integration, both social and professional. The cooperative's activities thus seem, at least in part, to have contributed to a discursive change from a problematic situation to one of acceptance of diversity and support for integration and reception activities on the part of local institutions but also of civil society. An interesting initiative which presented the difficult and, in some ways, absurd situation in which the newcomers sent to Val Camonica found themselves, but which also presented the initiatives put in place to counter this situation, is provided by the photographic reportage by Joan Bardeletti (https://issuu.com/joanbardeletti/docs/20120216-black_snow_bd2). In this reportage made in 2012, there are photographs of the event and brief information in French and English.

Bardeletti's intention is therefore to communicate not only the dimension of the here and now, often represented by the arrival of migrants on the coasts or around the borders of Europe and Italy, but the events that follow the crossing of the border, shedding lights on the difficulties of the integration process which, at least in Italy, leave little initial choice to newcomers, as the dispersal policies of the reception system demonstrate. Bardeletti does this through direct images, which sometimes work by oppositions, such as that of migrants hosted in the same resort where, in another area, tourists are welcomed, skiing serenely on the slopes.

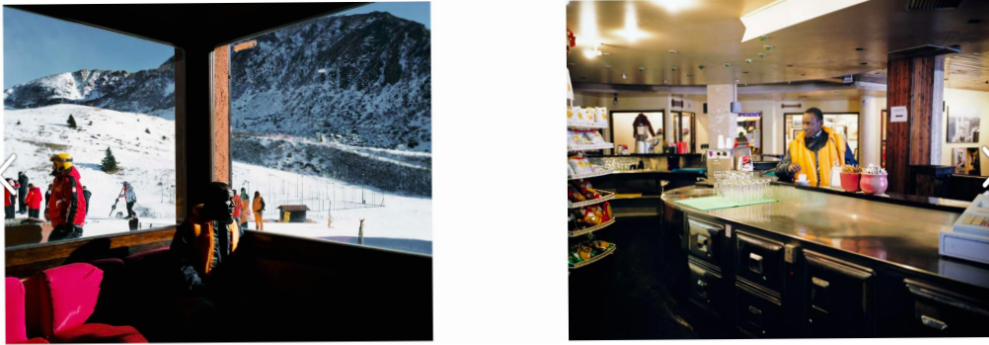


Fig.6

Source: Joan Bardeletti, https://issuu.com/joanbardeletti/docs/20120216-black_snow_bd2.

This is followed by some photos of moments of dialogue and integration in a particular context such as the mountains, and some moments of daily coexistence in the villages in Val Camonica.



Fig.7

Source: Joan Bardeletti, https://issuu.com/joanbardeletti/docs/20120216-black_snow_bd2.

Camini – Eurocoop Jungi Mundu

Unlike the K-Pax cooperative, the Eurocoop Jungi Mundu situated in Camini does not have a specific press release section. However, thanks to research on the web, and in particular using Google News, we have collected several articles and media documents about this interesting initiative in Calabria, which is in many ways similar to the well-known one in nearby Riace. Among the most discussed topics are the activities carried out by the Eurocoop Jungi Mundu and the benefits for the development of this small Calabrian village, as well as the various inclusive activities dedicated to migrants and the local community. These include, for example, articles on the various training

courses offered and the various workshops and vocational integration projects developed by the cooperative. However, there are also several articles that reflect on Camini's potential for local development, many of which, probably due to issues of territorial proximity, compare the "Riace model" with the "Camini model". In 2020, for example, an article in the *Corriere della Calabria* put forward the hypothesis that the downfall of the Riace model was probably due to its tendency to rely too much on the 'welfare state', on public funds and on a 'spontaneous' reception, while Camini was able to put a value on its different business projects, partly distancing itself from survival through public funds.

At the same time, other articles are only focus on the "Camini model" and present its potentials and positive impacts in terms of local inclusive development. An example is the article proposed by *Le Monde* in 2017, entitled "Migrants: Calabre, le front du refuge", that in the subtitle explains: *Alors que l'Italie appelle l'Europe à ouvrir ses ports aux bateaux secourant les migrants, des villages du Sud ont inventé un modèle d'intégration des réfugiés qui a ressuscité des lieux à l'agonie.*

Migrants Revive Dying Italian Towns

Small towns across Southern Italy experience economic and social revitalisation after embracing and expanding refugee resettlement programmes

Tori Travers · April 10, 2018 · 3 minutes read



Fig.8

Source: South EU Summit, 10 April 2018.

Also in the case of Camini, a photographic book has been realised to tell the activities of the cooperative and the daily reality of the Calabrian village. The title of this book is "Un mondo nuovo" (A new world), which was edited by Giusy Carnà with the photographer Celestino Gagliardi, and realised by Eurocoop Jungi Mundu with the patronage of the Municipality of Camini and the Sprar.

Finally, the roundtable for WP4 has been organized in Camini on the 26 of November 2022. The roundtable "Leaving, Staying, Returning? The role of the imaginary in the relationship between migrations and territories" brings together the themes of two research projects carried out by the Department of Sociology and Economic Law of the University of Bologna: the Horizon2020

project “Welcoming Spaces”, which aims at investigating the revitalisation of shrinking areas’, while offering welcoming and inclusion spaces for migrants, and the project financed by the Emilia-Romagna Region “Towards a tourism of roots in Emilia-Romagna: Memories, imagery, expectations and desires of the emigrants from Emilia-Romagna in Argentina and Brazil for a hospitable journey to discover their origins”, whose main objective is to investigate the feeling of belonging of the emigrants from Emilia-Romagna and their descendants residing in Argentina and Brazil to Emilia-Romagna and their expectations or habits when travelling to the places of their origins. The valorization of different types of knowledge, from academic to social work, from photographer to migrant, allowed the co-construction of a different and new imaginary, anchored in the time and space of a different Europe. A potentially positive effect of university research valorization on public research, in terms of quality, long-term orientation, and accessibility. The round table was attended by policymakers, scholars, local actors and representatives of the institutions (Pierluigi Musarò - Coordinator Welcoming Spaces Italia, University of Bologna, Paola Barretta - Associazione Carta di Roma, Karen Urso - University of Calabria, Giulia Galera - Miledù and Euricse, Melissa Moralli - University of Bologna, Ruggero Marra - Councillor for the Environment, Ecological Transition and Youth Policies of Villa San Giovanni, Giulia Sonzognò - Officina Giovani Aree Interne, Marina Gabrieli - National Coordinator of the Project “Tourism from the Roots” of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rosario Zurzolo - President Jungi Mundu, Elena Giacomelli - University of Bologna, Chiara Davino - University of Bologna, Ricardo Martins - University of Utrecht, Keina Espineira - University of La Coruña, Jofelle Tesorio, University of Utrecht, Alice Lomonaco - University of Bologna) contributing to produce new representations on these territories.

Finally, the photographic project “Connections. Collaborative imaginaries of territories in change across Europe’ (free download at the following link https://issuu.com/melmor23/docs/connections_the_itinerant_book).

The exhibition presents the stories, photographs and emotional maps created directly by those living everyday life in communities in transformation across Europe. The result is the co-construction of a different and new imaginary, which is anchored in the time and space of a different Europe. The images that follow are full of hope for the future, desire for change, complex encounters and collective utopias. We invite you to immerse yourself in this travelling exploration, to get to know through their eyes life in a lesser known but fascinating Europe: the Europe of connections. Many local journal published news regarding this important event.¹¹

11

Such as: <https://www.lentelocale.it/home/partire-restare-tornare-a-camini-una-tavola-rotonda-sui-temi-dell'accoglienza-e-dello-sviluppo-delle-aree-interne/>; <https://www.strill.it/citta/reggio/2022/11/a-camini-il-progetto-europeo-welcoming-spaces-la-rinascita-delle-aree-interne-e-la-creazione-di-spazi-di-accoglienza/>.

Given that the birth of the social enterprise Miledù dates back, compared to the other two previous cases, to a much more recent period (2019) and its activities are being implemented in recent months, as demonstrated, for example, by the Lariomania project, the media production on this experience is less than in the case of Camini and Breno. Probably, in the next few years, this initiative will therefore have much more media success than it has had so far, which is mainly focused on the local scale. However, despite these premises, we have collected and analysed 11 media documents that speak about it and the activities carried out by Miledù. The articles collected refer to the period between 2019, the year in which the social enterprise Miledù was born, and 2021, the year in which the cooperative implemented its actions on the territory of Como, thanks to a dense network of collaborations with other third sector actors, local administrations and small private enterprises present on the territory of Como and Lario. Most of the articles produced on a local scale focus on the activities implemented by the social enterprise, as well as the dense network of collaboration with other local actors that Miledù has managed to create since its inception.

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la Repubblica

ABBONATI | GEDI SMILE | R | ACCEDI

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ELENA GIGLIOTTI ALESSANDRO AVERONE L'INVENZIONE DELLA NEVE UN FILM DI VITTORIO MORONI CON LE ANIMAZIONI DI GIANLUIGI TOCCAFONDO DAL 14 SETTEMBRE AL CINEMA

f X e in p

Quattro eroi su quel ramo del lago di Como

di Alessandro Gassmann

▲ Illustrazione di Alberto Ruggieri

#GREENHEROES L'unione fa la forza e grazie al progetto "Lariomania" si riqualificano i terreni abbandonati

05 FEBBRAIO 2021 PUBBLICATO PIÙ DI UN ANNO FA

1 MINUTI DI LETTURA

Fig.9
Source: La Repubblica, #GreenHeroes from Como Lake, 5 February 2021.

The majority of the communication connected to Rise-Hub relates to its activities and its presence at local, national and international level. Among the activities that have been promoted there are ERASMUS+ projects, International Voluntary Workcamps in collaboration with the Alliance of European Voluntary Service, the “Info-Point on Youth Mobility”, the Legal Support Desk and other projects which are related to the sensibilisation on specific topics, from mobility to gender neutrality. The articles found in this first phase of the research are written in local or national newspapers. However, since Rise Hub develops mainly international mobility and cooperation projects, its online presence is spread in different websites of organisations working on these topics based in other European countries.

San Donato – Rise Hub, torna il volontariato internazionale nella Valle di Comino

IN TUTTA LA REGIONE

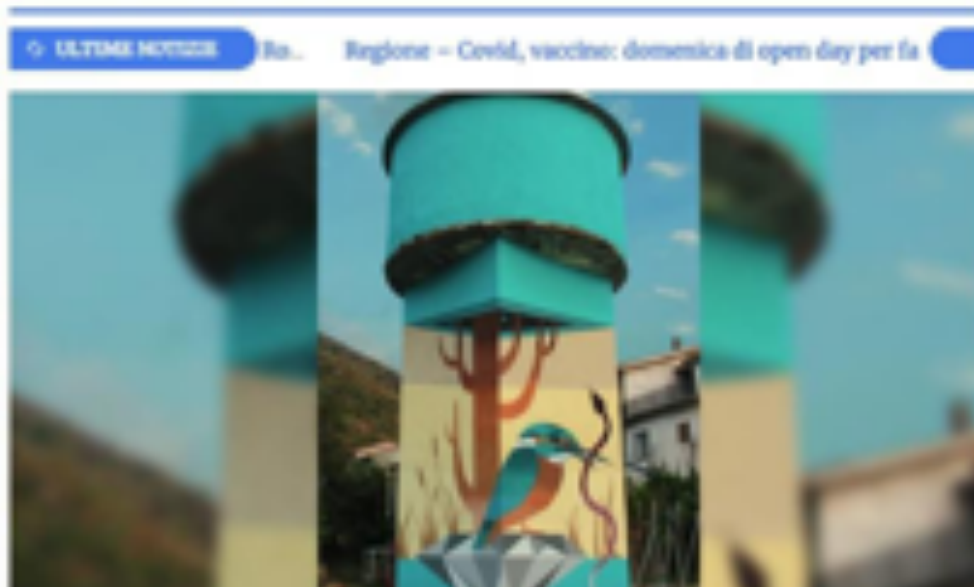


Fig.10

Source: Tg24.info, “San Donato – Rise Hub, international volunteers are back in Valle di Comino”, 16 August 2018.

Nuvola Rossa

The majority of the articles collected on Nuvola Rossa are based on the local level. This demonstrates that there is a lot of attention on the activities developed and implemented by the collective, especially because the majority of these activities are also aimed at involving people within the local community. The majority of these articles are valorising the activities

developed in Villa san Giovanni, such as the activities of urban regeneration or the added value of the reception centres for the local community. Instead, on issues that concern the territory of Rosarno and the Gioia Tauro Plain, as anticipated in the sections above, there is a lot of attention from the national and international press on the topic of the exploitation of migrants' labour and the presence of the gangmaster system. An example is the short reportage about the restrictions to the resources destined to the reception system in Villa San Giovanni in 2018, after the introduction of the Security Decrees, and the consequences both in the town and in the camps in San Ferdinando. The reportage was shot on national television in February 2020 and included some parts of interviews to some activists of Nuvola Rossa.



Fig.11

Source: Tg1 and Tv7, Image from the short reportage on the Sprar system in Villa san Giovanni and the situation in San Ferdinando.

Ilex cooperative

As in the case of the Miledù cooperative, the community cooperative Ilex was created quite recently, in 2021. The majority of the articles that talk about the activities planned and organised by Ilex have a local or provincial base (in this case, a newspaper located in Benevento, the province where Pietrelcina is located). However, the fact that Ilex won the public competition launched by LegaCoop Nazionale, the national league of cooperatives, gave Ilex a great national visibility. The competition's name was "Regeneriamo comunità" (Community Regeneration) and was aimed at start-ups. Ilex's great visibility was also due to the fact that it was the only Community Cooperative in Campania to have passed the national selection. Other newspaper articles present the activities of Ilex within the wider network of Municipalities of Welcome, based in Benevento.



Fig.12

Source: Vita.it, "Ilex, the start-up born in Pietrelcina to regenerate a small village", 14 December 2020.

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SPAIN

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Introduction

In order to carry out a preliminary analysis of the discourses present in Spain at the national level on the matter of migration, shrinking areas and their intersection, we aimed to understand first how migration and shrinkage are conceptualized in the selected territories, and how their transmission through written media shape the existent narratives. To do so, the Spanish UDC team has carried out a review of the existing academic literature and an extensive analysis of online press articles at national, regional and local levels, between 2010 and 2022, excluding the internationally produced media.

In general terms it could be said that migration, and specifically immigration, is a topic that seems able to generate interest among the Spanish population, as evidenced by the number of entries in Google's online search engine, compared to the volume of entries on the topic of shrinkage:

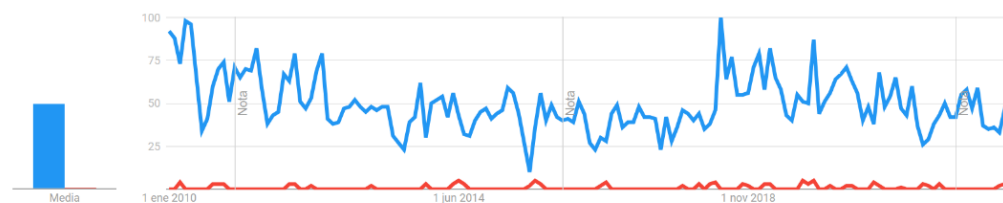


Fig.1

Comparison of the number of online searches on immigration (in blue) and shrinkage (in red) between 2010 and 2022.

Even if the analysis for this report has focused on the above-mentioned dates (2010-2022), we should not forget that the discourses towards migration do not exist in the void. There are highly relevant social, economic and political events that have represented a turning point in the development of migration narratives, shaping the discourses about the studied phenomena, both at national and international level. Some of the most relevant pivotal events for the conformation of the narrative frame could be the growing number of racist incidents at the end of the XXth century (Oso, Sala and Comet, 2021), the enactment of the law on foreigners 4/2000, the 11-S in 2001, the so-called "cayuco crisis"¹, the terrorist attacks of 2004 in Madrid, or the world economic crisis of 2008 and the subsequent austerity policies implemented. The specific informative impact of all those events will not be analysed here, however, they must be kept in mind for the conjunctural change they represent for the discursive productions, in these cases towards protectionist, securitized and conservative narratives.

The comparison between the Spanish context and other European countries falls as well beyond the scope of this preliminary study, although should be mentioned that the academic literature seems to point to the pre-existence of

1

The first registered picture of a shipwreck and human death on the southern coast of Andalusia in 1988, was followed by a steady informative dripping such as the mediatised "cayuco crisis" ("cayuco" is the name to designate a vessel originally used for artisanal fishing) from 1994 until 2006, consisting of the constant enunciation of the arrival of boats from North Africa at national maritime borders.

a more favourable attitudinal context towards immigration than in other states (Cebolla Boado & González Ferrer, 2016), being labelled as an “exceptionality” (Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015), until the emergence of VOX in 2014, the ultra-right-wing party.

Methodology

The revision of academic literature and reports

For the review of academic texts, a content analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 2003) was carried out through a search in the Scopus and Google Scholar databases, two of the main scientific repositories, limited to documents from 2010 to 2022.

At the first level, we sought for articles that contained the term “despoblación” or “despoblamiento”, and same terms together with “inmigración/migraciones”, both in the title and/or abstract. At a second level, we moved on to a contextual and discursive analysis, which allowed us to identify the narratives and discursive positions (Ruiz, 2009). Eventually, a total of 31 papers were selected for analysis.

Subsequently, we selected those articles whose content was related -central or transversal- to the treatment of this phenomenon in the mass media. It is noted that, in the case of Spain, the analysis of the media’s treatment of immigration is an academically underdeveloped subject. There are no official reports that analyse the media treatment of immigration in the context of rural depopulation. As examples of good journalistic practices, we would like to highlight the manual on “Immigrationism” of Red Acoge, as well as the project “por Causa”², which arose precisely with the aim of carrying out ethical investigative journalism on migration.

2

<https://porcausa.org/>

The online press analysis

The online press research was carried out using the methodology of content analysis (Cea D’Ancona, 1996; Coffey & Atkinson, 2003) and frame mapping (Igartua, Muñiz & Cheng, 2005). The articles were extracted from online search engines and digital newspaper archives of the most widely circulated national and regional newspapers³.

3

El País, El Mundo, 20Minutos, ABC, La Vanguardia, El Confidencial, La Voz de Galicia, El Heraldo de Aragón, el Diario de Huelva, La Crónica de Guadalajara, etc.

The extensive review of the press included 397 press articles in total, 102 of which belonged to the national level, 95 to the regional level, 105 to the provinces and 95 to the local sphere:

	Migration + Shrinkage	Shrinkage	Migration	Regional	Provincial	Local	Total nº of articles
Nº of initially selected	31	65	51	96	105	147	495
Nº of articles analysed	28	36	38	95	105	95	397

Tab.1
Compilation of the number of press articles selected and analysed.

Of the 495 articles initially selected, 98 were subsequently discarded. The main criteria to dismiss the articles was based on media sources, availability and relevance. For instance, when the written pieces were from international press or institutional/third sector communication, they were only available through paid subscriptions, or they dealt with topics of little relevance to the analysis of the narratives in question. The selected categories of analysis are intended to capture relevant aspects for further analysis and comparison:

Name	Description	Categories used
Search code	The sentence typed in the search engine (the most used codes have been, together with the name of the town, province or region).	Foreigner/immigrant/immigration/asylum/refugees/interculturality/intercultural/welcoming ("acogida")/integration/emigration (in Spain this term is sometimes misused to refer to flows of people coming from outside the national borders) /temporal workers/day workers("jornaleros")/shrinkage ("despoblación")/repopulation/revitalisation
Editorial	Those with the largest national and regional readership have been chosen. Being the most representative numerically:	El País, El Mundo, 20Minutos, ABC, La Vanguardia, El Confidencial, La Voz de Galicia, El Heraldo de Aragón, el Diario de Huelva, La Crónica de Guadalajara, etc.
Year	The year of publication of the news item	Between 2010 and 2022
Territorial scope	To analyse in which area of influence the news has been disseminated	Local, provincial, regional, national or international
Thematic axes	Understood as a binomial on which the news is positioned thematically	Repopulation/depopulation - revitalization/shrinkage - immigration - emigration - mix immigration and revitalization, welcoming initiatives, integration, asylum

Tab.2
Categories used for press analysis.

Tone	This category has been used with respect to the view it offers on migration	Positive, neutral o negative
Language use	Use of key terms	"Illegal", "people/person", alarmist, belligerent, health/disease, life/death, natural phenomena vocabulary, heavy use of data, generalization, etc.

>>>

Narrative	The underlying subcategories of the news item being	Utilitarian, vulnerability, active agency, local power, valorisation, expository, inclusive, intercultural, victimisation, innovation, criminalisation, nostalgic, dehumanisation, triumphalist, dysfunctionality, securitarian, identitarian, resource-based, pessimistic, problematising
Discursive subject	Who is being talked about, who is the "protagonist" of the news	Long term inhabitants, immigrants and refugees, security bodies, third sector, enterprises, public administrations, grassroots movements, women, others (describe)
Discursive subject	Who is being talked about, who is the "protagonist" of the news	Long term inhabitants, immigrants and refugees, security bodies, third sector, enterprises, public administrations, grassroots movements, women, others (describe)
Sources of information	Who has been used to obtain the information, the voices present, who has been consulted	Long term inhabitants, immigrants and refugees, security bodies, third sector, enterprises, public administrations, grassroots movements, women, others (describe)
Type of migration	The subcategories being	Return, return to national/international roots, immigration, "irregular" immigration, international protection, statelessness, emigration, seasonal workers, internal migrations, rural exodus
Nationalities of reference	The countries of origin of the people referred to in the news reports	I.e. Morocco, Romania, Venezuela, Colombia, etc. or use of generic terms such as "Latin America", "Sub-Saharan Africa", etc.
Media impact	In cases where this type of information is available	The number of shares, comments, reads, etc
Other issues	Other issues relevant to the analysis	Comments, etc.

<<<

In addition to a detailed search for articles relevant to the topic in question, a more generic search was carried out for each locality, in which information was collected about the most widespread type of news featuring the municipality. Contextualising whether the media-positionality of the localities was linked to the presence of foreign-born newcomers and learning if the news that address welcoming initiatives were significant in number, helped us understanding aspects such the relevance, and creating a tailor-made discursive frame for each case study, that can be seen in the second part of the WP4 review (see Part 2).

To support the drafting of this report, audio-visual documents available on the web such as news reports, television programmes, photo-reportages, etc. were screened. The type of audiovisual documents analysed, which dealt especially with both revitalisation/depopulation and sometimes refer to the reception of migrants, were programmes broadcasted on "public" television,⁴ mostly on regional or local TV stations, self-produced video clips hosted on the Youtube platform, or promotional videos of touristic nature on blogs related to the localities. For the analysis of the localities, other sources of information have also been explored, such as Facebook pages, Facebook groups and websites of the local councils (see the list of documents listed in Annex 1).

The information obtained in this stage has been later contrasted with the qualitative data extracted from the analysis of the interviews analysed.

4

Some were clips on the news, journalistic reports, or programs dedicated to visit "depopulated" or rural areas, describing their demographic characteristics, their main traditions and festivities, their landscape, etc (not displayed in prime-time TV).

From the numerous semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants of this study in the different localities (see Spanish Country Report, page 9), composed by people from migrant and non-migrant background, newcomers and long-term residents, key informants and local authorities:

PROFILES OF INTEREST	
TYPE	SUBTYPE
Administration	Mayors, local authority social workers /health centre, school counsellors, teachers, local development agents, regional/provincial governments, migration offices, observatories of equality/integration/migrations, etc.
Enterprises	Cooperatives, enterprises that contract many people from migrant origin or contract people from the country of origin, social enterprises, enterprises that impact on local development, coworking spaces, entrepreneurs, etc.
Third sector	Political parties, foundations, NGOs, unions, associations, civil organisations, volunteers, activists, migrant organisations, religious organisations, local leaders.
Inhabitants from migrant background	Workers/carers, long term residents of migrant origin, newcomers from migrant origin, retired, returned people, migrant women.
Inhabitants from non-migrant backgrounds	Workers/carers, young people that decided to stay, retired people, second generation, non-migrant women, etc.

Tab.3
Profiles of interest for the research.

Preliminary results

It should be noted that at a discursive level, not all categories under which migratory movements are labelled are described in the same way. For example, asylum and international protection enjoy a more favourable representation than the people labelled under the so-called “economic migration”, and some concepts, such as the word “foreigners” is used, especially on the first half of the analysed period, linked to the idea of “tourism”. Emigration, considered as a migration phenomenon “of our own”, is often described with a sense of belonging, pride and nostalgia, while “exile” is discursively associated with the ideologically relocated Spaniards abroad.

Narratives about migration in Spain and in shrinking areas of Spain

In the last decade the Spanish media has framed people of migrant background from an ethnocentric perspective. Narratives focusing on

immigration reveals the presence of a state of opinion that leans towards negative discourses, particularly regarding holders of working-type of visas, and overall, people facing an irregular administrative situation, which reflects a globalised informative trend: In this sense, the IOM (2018) has already been denouncing a negative representation in the media worldwide on the treatment of migration, especially in the case of undocumented migrants. What augmented substantially is a certain utilitarian approach of international migrations in the agenda of the demographic challenge⁵.

5

A couple of examples from the 28 articles we analyzed that intersect migration with depopulation (20 out of the 28 use utilitarian narratives) <https://elpais.com/espana/2021-09-18/la-juventud-migrante-renueva-la-espana-rural-despoblada.html> // https://www.elespanol.com/espana/20191228/repoplar-espana-inmigrantes-saturacion-ciudades-realidad-ficcion/455205116_0.html

INMIGRACIÓN >

La juventud migrante renueva la España rural despoblada

Uno de cada diez habitantes de los pueblos ha nacido en el extranjero y la cifra alcanza el 16% entre los menores de 39 años, según un estudio



Madou Traoré, 28 años, cierra la puerta del ganado en la finca donde trabaja en Malpartida (Cáceres) ROBERTO PALOMO

Fig.2

Example of news that use utilitarian narratives to address migration in rural areas.

The unfavourable imaginary elaborated about immigration coexisted with some narrative exceptions, such as the so-called “refugee crisis” in 2015, the Aquarius ship that docked in Valencia in 2018, and the current reception of Ukrainian citizens fleeing from war, that became more positively rooted in people’s discourses, regardless of their political orientation. Another turning point, this time with an antagonistic effect, was during 2018, when the far-right political party VOX irrupted in the Andalusian elections, winning 12 seats in Parliament for the first time in Spain, and following in other regions, such as in the regional elections in Castilla y León, where it won 13 seats, lifting the ban on racist and xenophobic speeches in online media and social media, which has been followed by a rise in the number of hate crimes.⁶

6

As documented in the report on the evolution of hate crimes in Spain 2021 published by the Ministry of the Interior: https://www.interior.gob.es/opencms/pdf/archivos-y-documentacion/documentacion-y-publicaciones/publicaciones-descargables/publicaciones-periodicas/informe-sobre-la-evolucion-de-los-delitos-de-odio-en-Espana/Informe_evolucion_delitos_odio_Espana_2021_126200207.pdf

News on immigration mostly focus on topics such as migration policy, migration flows towards Europe, or to the actions carried out by the third sector to support migrants at risk of social exclusion, with notably less information on integration, coexistence or activities promoted by migrants, creating a corpus of news of similar content, despite the diverse ideologies behind the media publications (Xambó Olmos, 2010). These publications usually make use of alarmist discourses, where dehumanization, homogenisation and over attention, linked to a lack of contextualisation, promote a diffuse and problematic image of immigration, a trend that has been coined in 2014 by the third sector organization Red Acoge as “immigrationalism”⁷. The images used reinforce existing prejudices about people with migrant background (minors and adults), relating them to poverty, criminality, overcrowding of public services or illegality, supported by a choice of vocabulary related to natural disasters, or words semantically close to the notion of danger (crisis, invasion, etc.), irreconcilable cultural differences, or fundamentalist attitudes, with an emphasis on the description of the nationality or country of origin, and frequent references to their administrative situation. Academic and technical analyses of the selection of journalistic sources seem to point to a lack of equanimity (Málaga Acoge, 2019; Rodríguez Martínez, 2021), where sources of institutional origin are prevalent, followed by the third sector, highlighting the under-use of voices of migrant origin. But, agreeing with several authors (Casero, 2007; Solves Almela & Arcos Urrutia, 2021), a widely used lexical formula, especially to refer to irregular immigration, is generalisation.

7

This annual publication aims to report on the media treatment of migration in Spain, enabling to identify the main discursive strategies that generate stereotypes and prejudices about migration, and also offering some recommendations on how to address the topic: https://redacoge.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Manual-Buenas-Practicas_Inmigracionalismo.pdf



Fig.3

An example of news that links migration with vulnerability.⁸

8

<https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2015/07/03/559593c8e2704e5a7b8b459e.html>

The representation of migrant women seems to reproduce visions that place them in the domestic sphere, dependent and/or marginal, or hyper-visible when describing labour activities related to illegality (Seijas, 2014; Rodríguez Zamorano, 2020), or cultural practices such as the veil, clitoral ablation, honour crimes or their supposedly high birth rate (Gil, 2010). Migrant women are, thus, devoid of agency (Creighton, 2013), often portrayed as victims, secondary actors in the migration process. An active image, bringing to light their agency, the economic impact of their migration, their contribution to development, and the role they can play in the process of migration is rarely highlighted. In the face of this, there is a resistance, visible in civil society mobilisations at the local level, business or professional initiatives, journalistic projects, activism, third sector actions and individual expressions in the public space, gaining strength in recent years, across initiatives of diverse nature such as TopManta⁹, Afroféminas¹⁰, Porcausa¹¹, the anti-rumour network Zaska¹², cyber-activism projects, etc., which challenge these discourses and propose new narratives, also from institutions, through the dissemination of style guides and recommendations¹³ (EAPN & AGARESO, 2011; Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya, 2021), although to date there is no code of ethics agreed among journalism professionals, as is the case in other European countries (Oller Alonso, Blanco Herrero, Splendore et al., 2021). The conscious effort to broaden the discursive horizons on migration in Spain is evident in the hard core of the mission of initiatives such as PorCausa, which is evident in the capacity to provide publishers with alternative information of high journalistic ethics and quality.

- 9 <https://topmanta.store/>
- 10 <https://afrofeminas.com/>
- 11 <https://porcausa.org/>
- 12 <http://www.zaskarumorez.com/>
- 13 https://www.eapn.es/ARCHIVO/documentos/documentos/1609329076_guia-contraporofobia_4.pdf



Fig.4
An example of news produced within the frame of PorCausa initiative.¹⁴

- 14 <https://mundonegro.es/las-personas-migrantes-somos-parte-activa-de-esta-sociedad/>

According to analyses of the interviews (see Table 3 of the present document) and online press, the narratives on people of foreign background in the selected case studies show an ambivalent representation. In general terms, the interviews show that the arrival of newcomers is appreciated by long-

term residents, local administrations and enterprises, as they are identified as necessary under a utilitarian argument, but on the other hand, unfavourable discourses of a criminalising or victimising/vulnerability type are also observed. The most present underlying narrative depicts a utilitarian conception of migration, sometimes acknowledging contributions in demography or as needed workforce, and sometimes even describing people as “saviours” of the village as their arrival helped with the provision for basic services. The immigration discourses as a possible solution to depopulation (utilitarians after all) seem to coexist with emerging discourses that seek to contest this idea, only offering counterarguments to each other, but without proposing alternative narratives that allows going beyond, to overcome these confronted views.



Fig.5

Example of news headlines illustrating both arguments.¹⁵

15

<https://www.lahoradigital.com/noticia/32527/sociedad/poblacion-inmigrante-clave-para-frenar-la-despoblacion-de-la-espana-rural.aspx>
 And : <https://www.diariopalentino.es/Noticia/ZD2E657F1-ACC7-F588-F1B548429C2970A9/202206/CCOO-pide-olvidar-la-idea-de-migrantes-contra-la-despoblacion>

Among the criminalising arguments, the association with drug trafficking, insecurity, terrorism, gender violence, the hyper sexualisation of women and, most frequently, taking advantage of public aid, overloading health services or receiving money from the state “without deserving it” stand out. The idea of migrants as victims is also underlying, they are often portrayed as needing help, in a situation of poverty, lacking training, lacking skills, etc., issues that are magnified when the subject of conversation is racialised women. However, these pre-judgements disappear in the case of certain nationalities, for example, if people come from the United States, Israel, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, etc. In such cases, people are seen as economically well-off, conceptualized again as “foreigners” (and not “immigrants”) and the fact that they settle in the territory is valued and a source of prestige for the area, although there is often criticism that their arrival is associated with a rise in housing prices; the benefits, at least in the people’s discourse, overcome the disadvantages. This line of argumentation poses the question as to how the long-term inhabitants are conceiving both types of settlers in terms of impact on the three selected factors: social wellbeing, political stability and economic viability, and whether the discourses drawn limit their emplacement.

VICTIMISATION - VULNERABILITY	CRIMINALISATION
<p>Terminology: "underdeveloped", "poor", "aid", "need", "exploitation", "resources", "public services", "pandemic", abundance of verbs that do not show active agency.</p>	<p>Terminology: "sub-Saharan Africans", "undocumented", avoiding the word "person", prison jargon ("riot", "escapes"), use of adjectives related to emergency ("crisis", "alert"), natural disasters ("avalanche", "wave"), or adjectives related to "full-numerous" ("overflowing", "crowds", "hundreds"), use of the oxymoron "crisis + permanent or constant" in the face of arrivals.</p>
<p>Socio-economic profile: women, refugees, migrants working in the primary sector, elderly, young people, economic sectors affected by COVID pandemic.</p>	<p>Socio-economic profile: immigrants, people from Africa (especially Sub-Saharan Africa), Muslims (especially Maghrebis), young immigrants, unaccompanied foreign minors, foreign prison population.</p>
<p>Key narratives: Infantilisation ("el chaval"(the lad), to refer to an adult male migrant), relation to use of welfare state-related services, relation to NGO assistance work as beneficiaries, emphasis on coordinated participation between society, enterprises and institutions, COVID pandemic as more virulent to vulnerable collectives, devitalization of the regions as deterioration of vulnerability.</p>	<p>Key narratives: migration as a problem, extensive use of data, dehumanisation ("seasonal workers hired in their countries of origin have become extinct"), over-blaming migrants ("these people "decide to flee their country" in boats that "barely float" and "sink at the drop of a hat" - testimony of a government official reproduced in the press), comparisons with a warlike environment ("like a Greek phalanx").</p>
<p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "the importance of "adequately training" young migrants arriving in Spain so that in the short or medium term they can join the labour market". - "points out that in less developed countries - where most immigrants come from - "there is a strong link between a high risk of infant mortality and a high rate of reproduction", which is why they tend to have more offspring." - "Forty per cent of immigrants are poor in Spain". - "We teach him the basics: how the washing machine works, the microwave". - "Sectors in which the pandemic has affected with more strength and rawness: tourism, hostelry and commerce". 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Immigrants arrive in Spain in masses." - "A group of undocumented immigrants "showed an unusually violent attitude, continuously attacking Moroccan army personnel who tried to contain them with sticks and stones." - "15 % of young Muslims in Spain have integration problems." - "Where will the refugees enter now? "Spain cannot let its guard down". - "We don't want to be the Maghreb".
UTILITARIAN	INTERCULTURALITY
<p>Terminology: "antidote", "active", abundance of words denoting collectivity ("immigration", "immigrants"), "opportunity", "potential", "rejuvenates", "repopulation", "workers", "resources".</p>	<p>Terminology: "effort", "foreign", "new", "flexibility", "adaptation", "customs", "traditions", "identity", "cohesion", "dialogue", "coexistence".</p>
<p>Socio-economic profile: immigrants (especially in rural areas), migrant families, foreigner kids at school ages.</p>	<p>Socio-economic profile: returnees, minors (with families in Spain), migrants of different ethnic and/or religious origins.</p>
<p>Key narratives: dehumanisation, there is a narrative subframe of migrants as "saviours" ("gratitude"), abundant use of verbal forms and expressions that denote low activity ("their presence in the territory", "we were among the first people to bring refugees") or are not very precise ("their arrival"), relates migrants with higher birth rates, importance of attracting migrants in order to maintain public services.</p>	<p>Key narratives: it usually includes subtle problematisation, news featuring institutions or the third sector, discourses about common enrichment between different communities by sharing and learning about other cultures, but recently also proliferation of problems deliberately associated to migrant groups (insecurity, sexism, delinquency, drugs trafficking, violence).</p>

<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [the immigrant] "the only one who could straighten out the battered demographic situation of the rural population, is the key to its demographic survival." - "Immigration has become the lifeline of an increasingly ageing Spain". - "Immigration has allowed us to become aware of the important contribution that the foreign population makes to "guarantee food production and especially to the life of our villages". - "The presence of immigration has meant a revulsive for the incorporation of Spanish women into the labour market". 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Foreign population dynamizes these centres with their jobs and their families, as well as bringing new cultural forms". - "Most of them make an incredible effort to understand each other, to understand the language, and they are rarely recognised".
REVALORISING	AMBIVALENT
<p>Terminology: use of active verbs ("help", "energise", "participate"), use of alternatives to commonly used concepts ("new neighbours", "foreign farmers", "new inhabitants", "families", etc.).</p>	<p>Terminology: "immigration", "repopulation", "revitalisation", "España Vacía" ("Empty Spain", term used to describe shrinking Spanish areas), "return to rural"</p>
<p>Socio-economic profile: returnee, foreign neo-rural, refugees.</p>	<p>Socio-economic profile: migrant people, refugees, return migrants, inner migrants</p>
<p>Key narratives: migration as a condition to repopulation and rejuvenation, contribution to more balanced demographics and better social capital, news indistinctly talking about rural and urban areas, statistically backed up discourses, some articles show an intrinsically underlying utilitarian sense on these revalorisation narratives by exposing vulnerability and exploitation conditions experienced by many migrants.</p>	<p>Key narratives: "migrant people" as the group to alleviate effects of depopulation thanks to 'their bigger birth rates', positive tone in general terms but with remarks on essential and cultural differences (gastronomy, folklore), trend to use a neutral language that does not overestimate positive nor negative aspects, but at the same time exposes the emplacement problems for migrants and conceives them from a fundamentally economic standpoint. Differences when talking about migrants as a collective (more generalist, with prejudices and distinctions on ethnicity) and about migrant individuals (mediated by personal experiences), discourses about migrants "replicating local trends and emigrating to urban areas", in a lesser amount opinion with a sort of "fatalism" expressing those rural areas are "condemned" and even arrival of migrants is not able to reverse this situation</p>
<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "They helped and help to fight rural depopulation". - "These people sustain care services and contribute to develop small business". - "They impact on the configuration of a more diverse and cosmopolitan rural environment versus the imaginary of an immobile and permanent local population". - "They don't want to make enemies; they come here to work". - "Although they have Spanish friends, they have also been victims of racism". 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Marian managed to develop a podcast series so the community could know about the cultural diversity of the rural areas by chatting with foreigner inhabitants in town". - "Our proposal is to take advantage of those funds in order to activate depopulated areas economies and, by the way, help people that need emplacement". - "Respond at the same time to the social problems that the continent has with immigration and demographics".

Tab.4

Summary of the most significant discourses identified during the analysis.

Favourable narratives towards migration have also been recorded during interviews: in every location, people's movement is seen more naturally; often the positive discourses mention the intercultural richness generated by the settlement of foreigners, but alluding to superficial cultural factors, such as gastronomy or folklore. The interlocutors often narrate migration in two layers, a generic one, where reference is made to a perceived collective (e.g., Romanians, Arabs, etc.) and where stereotypical and/or prejudiced views are found, and another, individual, where the known neighbour(s) are included. Comparisons are made by confronting the perceived reference group, which is usually the country of birth, with personal attributes. A profound lack of knowledge of customs, history, ways of relating to each other, traditions, etc. have been revealed during interviews. Between people of foreign background and those of national origin in the face of representations of the so-called "other cultures", who are perceived as foreign, strange and different, although there are exceptions, above all coming from migrant voices, which subscribe to narratives of cultural proximity, justifying the similarities:

"We are black, but we have a European culture [...]"
03112020_SGB1_M_1_a_III

The interviews show how, interestingly, foreign families coming from rural areas in the country of origin are often perceived as less "open" or less "flexible" than those coming from urban areas, which would be projecting one of the most repeated prejudices between cities and towns, spread from the national rural environment into the international "ruralities". Conversely, it is argued that migrants of rural origin find it easier to adapt to the host environment. People of foreign origin who have been settled for a long time often share the imaginary of those of national origin regarding "the difference between the people who arrived before and those who arrive now", with the people who settled in the past enjoying a higher status, and those who have arrived recently being criticized for "integrating less well". On the other hand, there are voices of migrant origin that qualify this phenomenon as being colonial, the interpretation given to these kinds of statements implies the desire to please the inhabitant of non-migrant origin:

"[...] and you will hear these things even from the blacks themselves, who have beliefs that... in my generation, [...] When you are born here, those who come from abroad... Those who are here consider that they are superior to those who are outside. That that is... that is a lie, because... it is a slave-owning belief. [...] I give a clear example... Naomi Campbell and Tyra Banks, and I make them compete with each other... and they lose focus on what is really important. That both are stronger when they are together. And that they compete with each other, for colour... to be liked by whom?... It is a belief ... colonialist... is the fact... just because you've been here for twenty years doesn't make you better or worse, that is, you are not going to be better or worse than someone else, and neither are you going to have more rights than someone who has just arrived, who has been here for nine years, that's a lie. Nor are you going to... you know? and because the other person treats you better, you should review that... Hey, it's not fair."
06112020_SGB1_NM_1_a

Some questions arise regarding the parallelism between the opinions of long-term inhabitants and the tone of migration through media over the last decades, whether the intercultural "melting pot approach", used at the beginning of the

Shrinking discourses from devitalizing Spain

The evolution of the phenomenon of depopulation or rural depopulation in the media has been marked from the first citizen movements under the slogan “Teruel existe”, in 1999, to the recent institutionalization of the issue by the recently created Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (Galletero-Campos & Echezarreta, 2022).

It is worth mentioning the importance of the year 2016, when the term “España Vacía” (“Empty Spain”) arises in the homonymous essay by Sergio de Molino, which is replicated by the mass media. According to Saiz Echezarreta et al. (2022: 8), the expression, specifically the terms “España Vacía” (Empty Spain) or “España Vaciada” (Emptied Spain), made it easier for journalists to embrace these two words to define a geographical area, the first, or to imprint a vindictive character for citizenship, the second. Alternative names for the shrinking phenomenon have been offered, aiming to differ from each other in semantic and ideological nuances: the most widespread is “España despoblada” (Depopulated Spain), “España abandonada” (Abandoned Spain), or the obsolete concept of “España interior” (Inner Spain).

At this moment, depopulation and the demographic challenge are consolidated as a stable issue in the media agenda, which has not lost interest after the pandemic (Saiz-Echezarreta et al., 2022). Even, some editorials have included the subject among their main lines of work, such as *El País*, or subsections, like in *EFE Agro*. In any case, the treatment of rural depopulation is considered to be “fashionable” or a “trending topic” due to the volume of news about it in the general media in Spain (Ortiz Miranda, 2020), with the positive and negative connotations that this entails. Among the positive ones, it has served to attract the attention of political leaders who are in the first instance those who should promote solutions to the rural question; among the negative ones, the excessively pessimistic treatment focused on its decline, promoting negative stereotypes of rurality (2020: 1).

At the national level, narratives and discourses are based on the concept of “depopulation” and not “shrinkage”: there is still no unanimously adopted translation of the concept, which is already significant in terms of the collective awareness of the phenomenon. Although since the end of the 19th century there have been discourses related to depopulation to a certain extent (García Ventura & Saz Sánchez, 2021). Depopulation in Spain equated with rural areas, with very few articles addressing shrinkage linked to cities, although incipient narratives are arising on the link between rural depopulation and shrinkage of nearby medium-sized municipalities.

DEMOGRAFÍA

La agonía de la España rural: pierde cinco habitantes por hora

El desierto demográfico sigue avanzando: cada quince días hay un pueblo más en riesgo extremo de despoblación



Pueblos semivacíos y sin niños, estampa habitual en cientos de localidades españolas // FABIÁN SIMÓN

ROBERTO PÉREZ

22/06/2017
Actualizado 26/09/2017 a las 19:44h.



SEGUIR AUTOR



Fig.6

Example of news that depicts rural Spain with pessimism.¹⁶

16

https://www.abc.es/sociedad/abci-agonia-espana-rural-pierde-cinco-habitantes-hora-201706222251_noticia.html

17

<http://sspa-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/Mapa174.pdf>

18

<https://geogeeks.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MinimalGallery/index.html?appid=d857f9639e664ffa9d17ce0f732490c>

19

This questioning of Madrid is a critique of the centralist state model that was implemented during the developmentalist Franco regime (1959-1975) and whose effects are manifested in the present day: https://elpais.com/espana/2021-11-21/la-hipotesis-espana-vaciada.html?rel=buscador_noticias

Some territories are identified with and described as belonging to these areas, characterised by a low population density, scarce infrastructures, a lack of access to services, and a high average age of the population. The network of Southern Sparsely Populated Areas (SSPA) has proposed a document zoning of Spanish municipalities subject to serious and permanent demographic disadvantages¹⁷, and online resources like “La España”¹⁸ also map demographical processes linked to depopulation. However, the online media do not represent the geographical area of the so-called “empty Spain” in a consistent manner, covering most of the territory of Castilla y León, Castilla la Mancha and Aragón. However, depending on the subject under discussion, some areas of Andalusia, Extremadura, Galicia or Asturias are also included. An interesting insight from one of the online press reports argues that “The emptied Spain does not refer to all of rural Spain, but essentially to that which looks at and interpellates Madrid”¹⁹.

Eduardo Moyano (2020) elaborates and systematizes a series of evident certainties about the Spanish rural reality and myths that have been imposed in the collective imaginary as a result of so much repetition in the media. Among the certainties, the enormous diversity of coexisting rural municipalities is emphasized, where the smallest and most isolated suffer the problem of depopulation as opposed to those “agro-cities” that do not have this problem; also, a distinction must be made between depopulation (demographic decline) and abandonment (of fields and territories), which do not always go together. As for the myths, it is believed that the improvement of infrastructures and services is the only factor that will solve rural depopulation, and also employment by itself does not seem to be the solution, since new jobs created are occupied by people that commute from the cities. In this line, the industrialization of the rural areas does not necessarily lead people to live in, as well as improving the access to higher education for the rural population can favour mobility to the cities (González Fernández et al., 2022). Another myth that should be clarified would be the proposal to repopulate the rural environment with groups from the urban environment, as well as the new phenomenon of rural tourism, which are not permanent solutions in many cases. Along these lines, what was thought to be a “return to rural areas”, driven first by immigration and then by the Covid-19 pandemic, seems to have occurred only temporarily and limited to those rural municipalities near the most populated cities (González Leonardo et al., 2022: 3-4).

LOS FLUJOS MIGRATORIOS

El 'gran retorno' a los pueblos desde las ciudades por la pandemia era un mito

Con el estallido de la pandemia, algunos urbanitas se fueron a vivir al campo y por unos meses parecía que podía ser la cura para la España vacía. Pero finalmente no



Un niño juega en Molina de Aragón. (Getty/David Ramos)

Fig.7

An example of news that describes how urban relocation to rural did not reversed depopulation.²⁰

20

https://www.elconfidencial.com/economia/2022-02-09/gran-retorno-pueblos-pandemia-mito_3372137/

The main thematic areas attention focuses on demonstrations (either by the citizen movements supporting shrinking areas, farmers, hunters), or shows reactions against extractive projects, the exploitation of natural resources (e.g., macro wind farms) or intensive livestock projects, and demand attention to the needs of the environment (still minoritarian the movements related to environmental sustainability). As well, the press items often report on the strategies follow by the villages in order to “survive”, looking often to means to tackle depopulation mostly used in Italy and Scotland. Also, plenty news informs with great statistical detail the demographic trends, especially describing villages with few neighbours or regions losing population, some other type of news portrays the rural areas as desirable, peaceful and bucolic,

promoting them touristically, others announce measures envisaged by public administrations to tackle depopulation or demands more investment from the public bodies (for improving services, infrastructures or Internet connection), describe the loss of services (such as banks, bars or medical services or rarely, the opening of a shop or hotel, and finally, some articles about the importance of changing current harmful rural narratives.

Narratives of political demands and an empowering nature have been gaining ground in recent years, increased after 2017 and highly influenced by the organised civil society movements such as “Teruel Existe” or “Soria Ya”, or associations like the previously mentioned Spanish Association Against Depopulation (Asociación Española Contra la Despoblación), the Association for the Development of the Celtiberian Mountains (Asociación para el Desarrollo de la Serranía Celtibérica), or the network of Southern Sparsely Populated Areas (SSPA), among others, feeding the production of new discourses and influencing the political agenda. To a lesser extent, but also present, efforts have been made to own the narratives, such as the Network of Rural Journalists, which emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic.



The image shows a screenshot of a news article from EL PAÍS. The article is titled "Innovación, cooperación, medio ambiente y comunidad: así es la realidad de la escuela rural" (Innovation, cooperation, environment and community: this is the reality of the rural school). The sub-headline reads: "Frente a la despoblación y las ideas preconcebidas, la educación en la España vaciada sobrevive haciendo uso de metodologías activas, competencias digitales y prácticas innovadoras" (Facing depopulation and preconceived ideas, education in the emptied Spain survives using active methodologies, digital skills and innovative practices). Below the text is a photograph of a group of children and adults gathered around a wooden raised garden bed in a rural setting, engaged in a hands-on activity. The caption below the photo reads: "Alumnos y docentes del CEIP Ramón y Cajal, en Alparín, Zaragoza. CEIP RAMÓN Y CAJAL".

Fig.8

An example of a positively framed discourse of rural areas.²¹

21

https://elpais.com/economia/formacion/2022-04-08/innovacion-cooperacion-medio-ambiente-y-comunidad-asi-es-la-realidad-de-la-escuela-rural.html?rel=buscador_noticias

The general framework of public discourse adopts a frequently pessimistic tone, where the concept of “disappearance” becomes central. The terms in which localities are usually described are related to human health metaphors (Sanz Hernández, 2016) (e.g., agony, bleeding), or to danger (e.g., demographic crisis, “demothanasia”), the comparison with urban

areas feeding antagonistic discourses, or to other latitudes where life is made difficult by extreme climates (e.g., Southern Lapland, deserts). The most prevalent narrative patterns tend to be the discourse against the state (Hernández, 2016), the lack of services (e.g. banks, doctors, schools), the abandonment of villages, or to a lesser extent narratives of opportunity and recovery thanks to the arrival of new settlers (on this occasion, people of migrant origin are usually mentioned), the promotion of tourism, attempts at municipal repopulation through the publication of job and housing offers, and also, in recent years, there seems to have been an increase in discourses that relate the depopulation of the territory to environmental degradation (García Ventura, & Saz Sánchez, 2021). The presence of audio-visual media at national, regional and local level tends to feed an idealised and romantic idea of the rural environment, and although radio programmes addressing this subject are few and far between, in recent years new sections, podcasts or programmes dedicated to it have emerged, an idealization that intensified particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local inhabitants do not always perceive or define themselves as shrinking areas during the interviews; in fact, it is accepted mainly by those located in the so-called “Empty Spain”, in the autonomous communities of Castilla León, Castilla la Mancha and Aragón. The devitalization discourse shared by media was appropriated by rural inhabitants, not just as an attempt to give visibility to a complex situation that is felt as “neglect from the public administrations”, but to tackle that very same situation from the organized civil society. Those territories located in Andalusia and Galicia often do not refer to the shrinking in the discourse, and when confronted, most answers elude it or deny it. In fact, the term most used throughout the country to express devitalisation is one of its main symptoms, depopulation. There is also a greater tendency to refer to a state of devitalisation when its nature is demographic in origin, so that municipalities facing challenges related to change in the productive sectors do not tend to be aware of shrinkage as such.

In the context of the 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a change in the narratives is advocated to overcome once and for all the urban vs rural binomial (Buchardó & Palomares, 2022). Indeed, during fieldwork, the mention of the rural-urban dichotomy was still very prevalent, as it happens in online press, where there is often a dialectical confrontation between the rural and the urban, either directly or indirectly, which places them as antagonists; on very rare occasions they are presented as complementary²². Thus, competing over resources or, “zero-sum” argumentation is often employed, focusing on the imbalance of access to material or human resources. The very idea of “complementarity between territories” is emphasized through new governance models in the context of ecological transition in the academia (Ortiz Miranda, 2020: 3-4). This requires new credible narratives that flee from the excessively simplistic and dogmatic messages that dominate public debate (Ortiz Miranda, 2020: 6-7). Nevertheless, people living in rural areas are aware of the idealisation/underdevelopment ambivalence of those unfamiliar with them:

22

Example of news that confront territorial areas: https://elpais.com/economia/2022-01-23/manifestacion-de-ganaderos-en-madrid-para-protestar-por-la-situacion-que-sufre-el-mundo-rural.html?rel=buscador_noticias

"[...] there is a stereotypical vision of the rural environment that is also absolutely opposed, in a double sense, isn't there? It is that which links us to the era of underdevelopment, and which takes us back to Puerto Hurraco and the opposite version, of an idyllic, paradisiacal place".
(Key informant, Soria) 12032021_SCLS8_O_1_a

And to which they react when they feel they are labelled as inhabitants of a backward, impoverished or boring environment:

"[...] and they always talk about us as depressed areas. Hey, wait a minute, I'm not depressed at all. That is to say (laughs), it is not a condition of the rural environment to be depressed, no, it is a quality..."
(Key informant, Soria) 12032021_SCLS8_O_1_a

In recent decades, civil society platforms such as Teruel Existe, Soria Ya, La Otra Guadalajara, among others, against the dismantling of life in rural areas and the third sector, like for example the Fundación CEPAIM, some of the rural development groups (GDR), or the Provincial Federation of Neighbours and Cultural Associations of Teruel (Federación provincial de vecinxs y asociaciones culturales de Teruel), have carried out intense awareness-raising work and media visibilisation with the aim of reappropriating the discourse and shaping it in an endogenous way, to promote a plural rurality, the idea that staying does not imply failure, that small is beautiful, and that "many things happen" in rural areas but remain out of focus:

"[...] what we are trying to do is to empower all the people to say: they are not going to change the story; we are going to change it."
(Key informant, Teruel) 26032021_SART_O_2_a

This change of paradigm is also observed in the literature, where it seems that in the last decade there has been a certain "cultural revitalization of the rural", although still not free of stereotypes that show villages on the edge of disappearance or oppressive rural environments, far from the rural contemporaneity of villages with people (Acosta-Naranjo, 2022: 98).

Likewise, there are recently created narrative approaches focused on disproving the great idealisation of the city, which avoid confronting negative arguments about the rural environment, generating alternative narratives.

However, victimising discourses have also been collected during interviews, in which the main protests were directed at the political spheres for feeling used in the electoral campaigns and forgotten after them²⁴. The past is recounted with a certain nostalgia by the elderly residents, but combined in most cases with proactive discourses, from the awareness of the need for agency, and for "struggle" or "fight" because nobody will work for them, and that if they do not occupy themselves, if they do not "act", the localities will end up disappearing. Most of the narratives on rural areas are endogamous, self-referential, meaning that they are situated within the rural itself. References to the urban exodus are recurrent, however the responsibility for it remains often concealed²⁵. Few articles defining the originating causes or attribute "culpability" of the processes of rural exodus and instead ascribe them to positive aspects of the urban sphere, such as the abundance of employment, while highlighting the "difficult lives" left behind in the rural areas. Very few articles use accusatory discourses towards urban areas, claiming historical

23

A massacre that occurred in 1990 due to historical enmity between families, which remained in the popular conscience as a representation of a sinister rural life: <https://www.rtve.es/television/20220107/puerto-hurraco-matanza-hermanos-izquierdo-cabaniillas/2248520.shtml>

24

An example of news that cover testimonies of "abandonment" by politicians: <https://www.elmundo.es/economia/ahorro-y-consumo/2019/03/31/5c9e3eac21efa0bc208b46e6.html>

25

As stated in some news and clearly exemplified by this article: <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/despoblamiento/la-espana-vaciada-vacia-pueblos-rural-plan-100-30-30-nostalgia-tramposa-y-rebeldias-por-venir-despoblacion-extremadura-desindustrializacion>

Los jóvenes vuelven a la España vaciada: "La ciudad no es un oasis, aquí hay oportunidades alucinantes"

Los datos indican que desde 2018 los municipios de menos de 5.000 habitantes ganan población



El joven agricultor Tom Rohde, fumiga los olivos de sus tierras / CEDIDA

Fig.10

An example of news that seek a change of narrative.

24

<https://www.epe.es/es/espana/20220812/jovenes-vuelven-espana-vaciada-oportunidades-alucinantes-14267590>

appears, on the one hand, as a “cause” or “consequence” and, on the other hand, as an “opportunity” or a “threat” (2016: 120).

- the agonistic is activated with the intention of alerting or alarming about a serious reality;
- the accommodating is the most common in recent times and also the most neutral and normalizing of the situation;
- the vindictive is a discourse less rigorous with reality, because it appeals to change the situation; it is reactive, emotional, aimed at mobilization and collectivity;
- the creative is activated in a framework of proactivity and hope for the future.

The increase in the perception of the depopulation problem is a consequence to a greater extent of the vindictive discourse, which has placed the demographic challenge at the center of the rhetoric of depopulation by the media (Sanz Hernández, 2016: 134).

In this line, Moyano (2020) establishes a categorization of the new discourses between those that emerge and develop from “within the rural world”, that expand from movements, platforms or rural associations and those that come from outside, “from the urban world”, with a diverse typology around

discourses of denunciation (abandonment of territories), of “rural idyll” (benefits of the rural world) and discourses of renaturalization of rural spaces (“rewilded”). The discourses constructed from outside would be focusing on the most singular cases, which distort the rural reality in all its diversity. In this sense, it is striking to note the appearance in the press of testimonies of rural residents that points out the existence of an external impostured discourse on depopulation²⁷.

In this line, some historians set themselves the task of “banishing catastrophist” and simplistic visions by rejecting the idea of the total crisis of the Spanish rural environment, arguing that the data do not evidence these catastrophist hypotheses (Collantes & Pinilla, 2020). Moreover, they put the focus on the fact that the causes of rural depopulation would be better explained by the expectations of a more favorable future in the urban environment, which families adopted and became propagating agents of change (2020: 20).

Finally, other authors try to shed light on the nebulous concept of “Empty Spain”, and analyze different alternatives and debates such as “demographic”, “gender”, “neo-rurality”, “bio-regions” or an alternative socioeconomic model, intentionally stimulating a debate about “degrowth economics” for the sustainability of rural areas, out of the agenda at present (Taibo, 2021).

27

<https://www.elmundo.es/sociedad/2015/10/28/5628ad6eca47413d6f8b45aa.html>
or https://elpais.com/planeta-futuro/red-de-expertos/2022-11-02/volvamos-a-los-pueblos.html?rel=buscador_noticias for example

How Welcoming Spaces are perceived

The narratives on Welcoming Spaces continue to receive insufficient attention from Spanish academic literature (Morén-Alegret & Solana, 2004), and national online press. The coverage of regional and local dynamics, and welcoming initiatives as well, is made visible by the provincial editions of publishing houses, being at this level that most of the stories illustrate reception practices and day-to-day events in the municipalities. At the national level, few reports are related to the combination of reception strategies and rural development. Those that focus on immigrants in contexts of depopulation or foreigners in contexts of depopulation are, within the scarcity, more numerous than the ones referring to people seeking international protection or refugees in depopulated rural areas, concurring with the national scenario.

Recent studies speak about the population benefits of immigration in rural municipalities, but also about the limitation of its impact, and even about the exaggeration of possible trends that speak of the migrant population returning to the village (Buchardó & Palomares). In this sense, some authors (Pérez, 2021) evaluate the recent “National Strategy against Depopulation in the Demographic Challenge” and are very critical of the policies in this regard, for not being realistic with the scientific evidence and simplistic with the measures that, from above, they put on the table.

Some historians (Herzog, 2020) point out the need to look at the old repopulations of the 18th century in Spain in order to learn from those debates. Specifically, they introduce the issue of conflict in the integration between

new settlers and locals, based on an example that occurred in a Galician village, to point out that the “nativist” discourse of the locals in rural areas should be considered in order to avoid communal conflicts²⁸. In this sense, it is advocated to introduce in the discourse not only the territories, but also the people, in this case the new settlers (migrants).

However, some voices are critical of the transfer of population groups to repopulate the rural environment, as they warn of the limitations and possibilities of success that these actions have on their own (Moyano, 2020: 40) especially if they are not carried out jointly with other public policies. It is noted that the basic problem continues to be the greater possibilities and attractiveness that life in urban areas continues to have over rural areas, in terms of employment and personal development.

In this sense, it is suggested that the rural environment would cease to be a way station for the migrant population if it were provided with possibilities and opportunities to fully develop the migratory project (Sampedro Gallego, 2022; Rivera Escribano, 2020). Some strategies that favour integration and rootedness depend both on the capacity of rural areas to retain these groups -through employment, but not only- and also on the migrants themselves, linking their migratory projects with the formation of households, attracting members of the transnational family or forming mixed families with native population. The unit of action where to put the focus would therefore not be the individual, but the family or household (Sampedro Gallego & Camarero Rioja, 2016).

These strategies, though, are not easy, and studies show how complex it is for new settlers to take root in these enclaves, mainly due to a difficult integration -local character, housing, previous capital, confrontation of expectations, etc.- and the impossibility of developing jobs that economically allow them to develop their life project (Rivera Escribano, 2020). In this sense, these authors focus on gaining in-depth knowledge of the elements that influence the rooting process of new migrants in rural areas. Elements such as those mentioned above -life projects, access to housing and employment, integration, etc.- are taking into account in order to provide a road map for public administrations to promote the process of rooting in depopulated areas (Rivera Escribano, 2022).

Welcoming Spaces (or “espacios acogedores” in Spanish) are perceived by inhabitants in the interviews as places of peaceful coexistence, where people of foreign or national origin settle, fulfil a function for the survival of the locality or improve the local economic viability. Places that have traditionally been sources of emigration, or where the arrival of people “from outside” has contributed to their growth, are described as having a “welcoming nature”, and welcoming would be their essence. In some of the selected territories, social agents were aware and reproduce the term “welcoming”, like in Burela, San Bartolomé de la Torre or Camañas, while in others, like Celanova or Molina de Aragón, it was not immediately explicit. The discourse of welcome, of the intercultural enclave and the presence of people of foreign origin is sometimes used as a media positioning strategy at regional level, as is the case in Burela or Arenillas. Where the narratives about Welcoming Spaces seem to differ is in the transnational sphere, both in the way they are presented

28

Within a growing media interest in the rural question, it is worth mentioning how Spanish fiction recently rescued this issue in the outstanding film “As bestas” (2022), about rural conflicts between locals and outsiders in a small Galician village.

by the people who arrive to inhabit them, as well as by the perception from the social network that remains in the countries of origin:

[...] “the family, isn't it? That sometimes, when people go abroad, they go, suddenly, to have money, to earn millions... to live in a very opulent way... but it's that... and when we talk, sometimes, with... with family, for example, on my husband's side, but it's not easy, we tell them, no... I mean, at the beginning you have to... you have to work a lot”.

(Key informant, Soria) 11032021_SCLS7_M_1_a

One of the underlying elements in the discourses of the agents involved in the reception is a supposed duty of gratitude by the people who have arrived in the locality for the conditions offered, although there are also voices within this same group that highlights the unequal criteria used:

“Emigrants (referring to immigrants, it is a common mistake) aren't offered that many things to get them to come and live in the village. I think that sometimes it's a bit selfish, isn't it? To think that as they come from nowhere, or they come from a very big problem, so here they have it... but man, let's see, do you want it for yourself? I mean, what do you think? Would I want it for myself? No. Well, then, why should it be OK for others?”

(Key informant, Quintana Redonda) 10032021_SCLS7_E_1_a

In the case studies analysed, the narratives about migrants, the devitalised rural environment and the spaces for welcoming are created by the media, the inhabitants who have been settled in the territories for a long time, and organised civil society, including third sector organisations, who usually act as interlocutors with the advantages and disadvantages that this entails, citizens' platforms and associations of people of migrant origin. The literature and media analyses show that the latter group is the most silenced, not often the migrants narrate their own experience in the news, usually treated as passive subjects. Although there are exceptions that manage to generate their own stories, such as the initiative of Las Jornaleras en Lucha, with a national media impact that shifted the narratives on vulnerability and points out the conditions of labour exploitation that women suffered, or the Association of Muslims in Burela, with a modest reach of local scope. Sometimes, migrant communities themselves argue that they would benefit from a revision of the narratives they have appropriated, which perpetuate harmful visions and discourses about themselves.

On these initial notes, questions emerge as to how historically rooted discourses limit the development of welcoming spaces, what the presence of opposing discourses in the same territory can tell us about social cohesion, or, finally, the question of “to be or to belong”, which is when inhabitants of foreign origin cease to be labelled as outsiders.

Antonina Semedo: las mujeres, la música y el mar

Llegó al pequeño pueblo de Cangas de Foz, en la costa de Lugo, desde Cabo Verde con 24 años, siguiendo los pasos de su marido

“Siempre hay racismo. Aquí y en Cabo Verde. En la convivencia no se nota mucho. ¿Sabes cuándo lo encuentras? Cuando mi hija negra se va a casar con tu hijo blanco”



La caboverdiana, Antonina Semedo. Alba Sotelo

María Rúa 4 de agosto de 2019 - 21:06h

Fig.11

An example of news that places migrant testimonies at the centre.²⁹

29

https://www.eldiario.es/galicia/mujeres-musica-mar_1_1480411.html

Final remarks

A possible shortcoming of the present analysis may derive from the fact that it is an eminently national analysis, in which only Spanish media have been analysed, although narratives do not only emerge within national borders. The same could be argued for narratives at smaller-scale territorial levels, which are embedded in existing narratives at the state level. The present analysis would gain in depth and be enriched by considering to a greater extent the discourses produced by migrants towards other migrants, of different origins or who have arrived at different times in the locality. Also, by delving into the narratives of each editorial, relevant details could be extracted for the analysis, in terms of political and journalistic visions linked to the migration framework of imaginaries.

The narratives produced by migrants receive less journalistic coverage. The

rare exceptions in the mainstream media remain anecdotic, or accounts of specific experiences in a particular locality, but they are not systematically incorporated when talking about immigration and development. Migrant's narratives are scarce, facing ethnocentric discourses like the widespread "integration" framework.

The benefits of foreign immigration appear within the recommendations, and it is criticized that governments do not have it in their roadmap, but, at the same time, migrants are treated as excessively complex and from a negativist approach, by focusing on the difficulties of reception and integration policies to generate communities in which these new residents can take root and contribute to their dynamism and interculturality. The need to create new narratives, more positive in tone, which would offer alternative visions that would overcome the utilitarianism through which immigration is described, is evident.

Therefore, the representation of migration in the academic literature, and increasingly in written press as well, has a utilitarian character, in the sense that international migrations are now beginning to be more closely linked to the rural sphere, with the advent of the problem of rural depopulation in academic publications; and on the other hand, a discourse that puts interculturality - linked to rootedness - at the centre of the narrative, delving into the complexity of the integration of these new groups, a new "cultural challenge" (Miner Guerrero, 2018, p. 529) that is added to the "demographic" one.

Regarding the production of narratives, to a large extent immigration is treated as a homogeneous whole, for example, when talking about population flows and movements from the city to the countryside, or when analysing the quantitative impact, they have on host societies. Although there is an increasing production that echoes migrant discourses on the possibilities of remaining in rural areas, this is practically based on the objective of repopulation, and not so much on the welfare of migrant populations.

An academic insight that could help to understand the shaping of current discourses on immigration, and even on depopulation, is the one stated in the published article by Solves Almela & Arcos Urrutia (2021:261), "As long as immigration policies are a failure, the image of immigration will be negative, and the media will be tempted to do the easy thing: to report that first negative layer of information". May the changes in public policy influence the visions over immigration and depopulation?



Fig.12 Political map of Spain showing the analysed localities included in the report.³⁰

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Extracted from the website of “campingarmanello” and customized.

Each of the localities included in the Country Report are displayed in alphabetical order.

Arenillas and Quintana Redonda

Arenillas

This locality has an established communication strategy, visible through their prolific press appearances –mostly at provincial and national levels-. The strategy emphasises the active agency of all its inhabitants and the importance of their united doing to “endure the shrinkage”. In contrast to other municipalities, the focus of the discourse is on the communitarian sphere; how the village, through common initiatives (revitalisation and reception initiatives, or welcoming initiatives), has managed to maintain the same number of inhabitants over the last 3 decades. Immigration is mentioned in some of the publications, although it is not the central element, as in the interviews the vocabulary used to refer to neighbours does not distinguish between origins, normalising that the welcome is for everyone regardless their country of birth. There is an underlying narrative of resistance and salvation in the discourse of revitalisation, a common element in several localities studied -sometimes

focused on people of migrant origins, and in others, as in the case of Arenillas, emphasizing collective action in contrast to political inaction and using the narrative of salvation on children, highlighting in every article and interview the large proportion of children living in the locality and labelling it as a “miracle”:



**Suscríbete
ahora** ★
5€ al mes
para toda la vida

ABC España
El «milagro» de Arenillas

El «milagro» de Arenillas

El número de vecinos de este municipio soriano ha crecido un 50% este año y los niños han pasado de cero a diez en una década



La presencia de niños en Arenillas contrasta con la de otros municipios despoblados de la Comunidad // ABC

SERGIO GARCÍA

08/10/2018
Actualizado a las 10:47h.







Fig.13

An example of the narratives of “salvation” present in Arenillas.³¹

30

https://www.abc.es/espana/castilla-leon/abci-milagro-arenillas-201810081044_noticia.html

Almost the entire corpus of Arenillas’ journalistic work deals with the subject of depopulation, directly or indirectly. After all, in recent years Arenillas has become a symbol of “victory” over depopulation -not only at provincial level, but also at national level, as the Ministry of Demographic Challenge visited it and declared it a national example-. Perhaps, after news describing the revitalization and the town’s ability to maintain a stable census with a low average age of the population, the most repeated news covers the rock festival against depopulation, Boina Fest, and numerous cultural or sport events celebrated at the municipality. In any case, those descriptions fall on the axis of revitalisation.

The most represented voices on interviews are those of the mayor and of the residents’ association through a spokesperson who curiously was not born in the village. However, the voices of people of migrant origins are often

diluted. Although their testimonies are directly or indirectly reflected in some of the journalistic interviews, their presence is not mentioned in most of the interviews, which could be interpreted both as an attempt to normalise their neighborhood and to overlook it.

All in all, Arenillas could be seen as an example of how cultural events can be used to give visibility to an area and about how they can indirectly draw attention to a relevant topic for the community (depopulation), but also about how consistency in discourse helps to confer a clear picture of the locality, at least at the provincial level.

Quintana Redonda

Of all the localities, Quintana Redonda is perhaps the one with the least defined communication strategy. During the interviews, at least from the point of view of the administration, the municipality was portrayed as a “dormitory town” in Soria, seen the proximity to the urban area as a positive aspect. The amount of news that address the municipality is small, although many of them focus on positive aspects such as enhanced economic sectors, reception of funding from the administration for improvements on the town and its services, or announcement of festivities. There were also numerous examples of news articles in which pessimistic arguments predominate, describing the locality according to “what is missing”, in line with some of the discourses collected in the interviews -especially those of newcomers-.

It could be argued that most of the news are aimed at a specific audience, as the prolific announcement of its festivities is of special interest to the population with ties to the municipality (the so called “población vinculada”) and the news items located on the axis of revitalisation for possible new inhabitants, which reflects what happens in the day-to-day life of the municipality, which is highly seasonal (during the summer holidays and festivals, people with familiar/emotional ties come here).

The existent welcoming initiatives are unannounced, barely advertised or present online.

Soria Province

The province of Soria has certainly tried to start some welcoming initiatives in order to back away the effects of depopulation in a region with a very low population density. These attempts have been developed by local and provincial administrations, as well as by third sector organizations. Most of

these initiatives are conceived from an utilitarian standpoint, trying to attract population as a guarantee for the maintenance of public services and resources. In this sense, Soria has also supported the reception of refugees as a part of its strategy to revitalize the rural environment.

Castille and Leon

Castille and Leon is a region with serious depopulation and ageing issues. The idea of attracting migrant workers to repopulate the territory has been object of intense and heated discussions at the institutional level, being some municipalities the ones that have undertaken these initiatives in a more determined way.

While the previous regional government – and particularly its vice-president Igea- looked interested on attracting migrants as a solution, the current one – a right-wing and ultraconservative coalition – has expressed its “preference for native births”. Parties outside the government and unions don’t see this as a viable alternative either. Their position holds the lack of job opportunities and the folding of public services as strong arguments against this strategy, adducing that the ongoing situation even precludes the stay of local population. From a journalistic perspective, Castille and Leon is undoubtedly one of the Spanish regions that most draw the attention of depopulation narratives, due to the apparent irreversibility and chronification of this phenom there.

Burela and Comarca de Celanova

Burela

Burela has produced the most news of all those analysed in the report, which is possibly and partly linked to its semi-rural condition – it has the largest number of inhabitants, close to 10,000 – , but also due to a very marked discourse as a “melting pot” supported by the public administration.

The impact of the news is mostly regional, although it has sometimes spilled over into the national press. Narratives of vulnerability, inclusion and utilitarian discourses are the most frequent, but one clear difference between the press and the interviews in the use of vocabulary is that the latter tend to use many more metaphors and terms related to the sea and fishing than in media.

Undoubtedly, the most represented nationality both in interviews and in the press is Cape Verdean, followed by Peruvian. This coincides with the fact

that these are the two most present nationalities in the municipality. However, the Indonesian group is given greater visibility than the Moroccan, Brazilian, Colombian, or Senegalese, who are possibly inhabiting the locality in greater numbers than the first ones. It may be possible that the collectives more present in the sea, being the sea the most visible of Burela in economic and social terms, make them gain prominence over others. Another possible reason for this over-representation might be given by the fact that this origin is frequently described as “exotic”, especially if we compare it to other nationalities much more traditional and present on the Spanish context.

A preliminary broad analysis about the “integration issue” could point out to divergences between the existing press and the interviews, as the discourse of “perfect or almost perfect integration” is very present in the reports produced, but much less present in the voices of the people interviewed. However, analysing in greater depth, we see that the discourse of “the Galician Tower of Babel” is consistent with the kind of sources that produces them; the institutions and, in this case, the paradigmatic group of Batuko represented by Antonina Semedo reproduce the “myth”. However, the voices under-represented in media are precisely those discordant with the prevailing “official” discourse.

Lugo Province

The province of Lugo is immersed in a context of accelerated ageing and massive emigration of young people, being the arrival of migrant workers the only thing that slightly balances the demographic pyramid. “A Mariña” is the area that comparatively contributes the most on the arrival of migrants. The particularity of this place comes by, among other facts, the strategy of attracting migrant workers in origin, which translates into a higher number of regularizations; however, transnational mobility networks also play a crucial role on this process. Regarding the situation on the rest of the province, journalistic narratives echo the precarious situation that a large proportion of migrant workers employed on sectors such as agricultural and care services suffer from. In fact, this topic is way more present on news than any other when it comes to discourses about immigration, witnessing the province several police operations of a big scale disarticulating exploitation networks over the last years.

Cierre insulso para la Operación Pollo, la mayor trama de explotación de inmigrantes en Galicia



ANDRÉ S. ZAPATA
LUGO / LA VOZ



Piso de Lugo en el que vivían en el 2008 los marroquíes explotados PRADERO

Fig.14

“Operación Pollo” is clear example of one of the these police operations against migrant labor exploitation. More than 500 Maghrebi workers were caught and forced to work under exploitation conditions and to live at overcrowded homes.³²

32

<https://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/noticia/lugo/lugo/2022/05/04/victimas-operacion-pollo-recibiran-indemnizaciones-menores-pagaron-entrar-esclavizados->

Celanova County

The present narratives show a favourable approach towards migration, both out-migration (in most cases surrounded by a halo of “prestige”) and in-migration, to such an extent that, during the interviews, people always used the word “emigrante” (out-migrant) to define both population flows. This use of vocabulary proves the social importance of out migration.

The county of Celanova has positioned itself as a rural cultural capital at the Galician level, and its narrative anchorage to the past is profound. Discourses based on “nostalgia” accompany several of this news, as do discourses on vulnerability. Both narratives are highly present in the conducted interviews.

The Venezuelan returnee community -as well as the Venezuelan “return to the roots”- is undoubtedly the group that eclipses any other nationality present in the territory, managing to acquire an international press reach (when there is hardly any national coverage, being only relevant at regional and provincial levels) which is supported by an active aim for visibility pursued by the Cantaclaro Association. Most of the stories depicted during fieldwork

-as many in the press- talk about a former prosperity that turned into social downscaling when arrived on Spain; however, we can also find a journalistic over-representation of success stories of emigrant descent people:



La Voz de Galicia

- 80% DTO. BLACK DAYS Suscríbete 6 meses por solo 9,95€

Celanova se tiñe de «tie-dye» y de buenas vibras

MARÍA DOALLO
OURENSE

Cristina, el pequeño Milan, y Ana

MIGUEL VILLAR

Fig. 15

Example of a successful “return to roots” news story from two women born in the US.³³

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<https://www.lavozdegalicia.es/noticia/ourense/celanova/2021/07/24/celanova-tine-tie-dye-buenas->

Recently, many reports have echoed the new museum of emigration to Equatorial Guinea, which exclusively narrates “the Galician emigrants” side of the story. An informative trend that maintains an ongoing interest (not in number of articles produced, but in longitudinal attention) is the revitalisation project carried out in the formerly abandoned village of Saumedede, where people from different backgrounds -but mainly from EU countries- are proposing an alternative way of life.

The word “collective” is very present in the Celanova context. This could be associated with the dense structure mediated by the organisation “Cantaclaro”, around which people linked to Venezuela culturally and socially organise themselves. As a result, these uniform and joint actions may be favouring a more “en bloc” vision of the people.

Something striking at a discursive level on media is the over-representation of people under irregular administrative situation; it is repeatedly mentioned both the irregular statuses and the fact that there is an increasing number of people in this situation. These representations have called our attention since the

proportion of migrants under irregularity conditions is significantly less than at the national level; in fact, Celanova is a place where most migrants hold the Spanish nationality or a residence-work permit of humanitarian nature.

Galicia

Galicia is a region with little demographic dynamism and high ageing rates. The arrival of immigration as the only restraint to a bigger population loss is a characteristic feature across all the Galician territory. The areas more punished by depopulation are located at the inner and rural districts, although several strategies have been deployed in order to fight against it: Local Development Groups joint between different municipalities, labor initiatives targeted to promote the primary sector and the women work at active ages, civic platforms such as “Galicia Baleira” – “Empty Galicia” –...

When asked about what to do in order to take advantage of both development initiatives and migration flows, most of the narratives insist on the relevance of the institutional support to agrobusiness entrepreneurship and the intensification of attractions in origin when hiring migrant workers as a vital development vector for the region, especially at rural inner zones.

Camañas

Camañas

As Arenillas, Camañas serves as an “example” of active agency to “act against depopulation” in a context where the decrease in the number of inhabitants is consistently framed as a problem. The abundance of news about sporting events and mycology is very useful to strategically place the locality towards the reception of regional tourism, which represents one of its main economic activities.

The impact of the news regarding migration is mainly at provincial and regional level, with an occasional presence at the national level. Regarding the tone used to describe the newcomers, in both journalistic articles and the interviews, is positive, as they are described as “one of the pillars” on which revitalisation is based. Sometimes, and not only here but in other selected localities, the migrants are depicted as “saviours”, which collides with an also frequent narrative underlining their alleged vulnerability.

One of the differential narratives developed here is that of “union”. The triangle of localities Camañas, Visiedo and Perales de Alfambra have become very present in news production related to reception and revitalisation. This commitment to cooperation among these three territories is evident in the discourses of the interviews carried out, revealing common projects and complementary visions that prioritise the continuity of life in the villages over political differences.

Another characteristic element in the creation of discourses on revitalisation comes from the commitment to maintain the primary school – and even the opening of a nursery school –. Which seems striking about Camañas, being one of the studied localities with the least number of accessible services nearby, is that the narrative formulas about “what is missing” are not particularly used. Lastly, regarding the narratives about development patterns, the presence of intensive livestock farming onsite is not a cause for criticism or discourses of opposition; on the contrary, at the local level in both media and interviews it is seen as positive for the “survival” of the area, being highlighted as one of the main sources of income and attraction of newcomers and, therefore, leaving no room for questioning the environmental sustainability of the applied models.

Teruel Province

The situation in Teruel is very similar to Soria's, which we previously described: a lot of municipalities have a very low and old population, population density is also very low, and a vast majority of the welcoming and reception initiatives seek to attract migrants with the maintenance of public services as the main goal. In this sense, it is very remarkable the solidity of the existing collaboration between municipalities and third sector organizations to fight against depopulation.

Aragón

Repopulation strategies based on attracting migrant workers have usually been successful in the region of Aragón. Several municipalities have opted for this formula, and financial support from higher level administrations has been truly important on this accomplishment. Nonetheless, this support has not been matched by the very demanded improvement of areas such as infrastructures and telecommunications. Cooperation with third sector

organizations has also been significant on the success of these strategies since it has hugely helped to contact potentially interested foreign families. It is necessary to note that might be too early to properly assess the real impact of these projects because most of them have been implemented over the last years. In addition, it exists a high level of rotation between families; those who tend to settle down indefinitely are a minority, while most of them only stay temporarily on their pursuit of a better economic stability. In this sense, locals and foreigners point out that the shortage of infrastructures, telecommunications and services are a determining factor on the final choice of families.

Molina de Aragón

Molina de Aragón

Molina de Aragón is located on the least densely populated area of the Iberian Peninsula. Known as “the coldest town in Spain” because of the very low minimum temperatures registered during winter, many journalistic narratives agree on the fact that there is an existing feeling of “immobility” in the locality. This sensation is closely related to the lack of job and life opportunities for a young local population that are pushed to emigrate in order to be able to complete their educational trajectories.

Firstly, narratives of local population are mostly pessimistic. While young people claim for improvements on areas such as telecommunications and leisure offer, the older ones insist on the need for mobility of youth generations. Therefore, emigration is seen as the best solution to have a better future away from the toughness of agrarian work –which is a main income source of the large immigrant population in town – and the shortage of efficient and nearby public services. Secondly, this locality goes through a certain level of dynamization during the months of summer due to rural tourism and temporary return migration of local –born people – and their descendants – on holidays. On the other hand, local politicians’ narrative is a bit more optimistic. Although it is common between them the opinion that the COVID pandemic has opened some kind of “opportunity window” a spread of telecommuting, a larger spot for “demographic challenge” and rural depopulation on public discussions – they also bitterly complain about some existing imbalances. Molina’s area, located at the East of the province of Guadalajara, is much more deserted, which provokes disadvantages when it comes to attracting workers and companies – communication issues, unbalanced taxation, neglect of upper-level administrations–.

In this sense, the provinces of Soria, Guadalajara and Teruel have made joint

efforts in order to alleviate the effects of depopulation. They claim, among many other things, for tax bonuses that encourage business and people to settle in these very punished by emptying areas. Some other proposed actions are, for instance, the intensification of nature management and conservation work and the hiring of migrant workers on the grazing sector –which is under a permanent process of ageing despite its historical and current importance on the region –.

Guadalajara Province

The province of Guadalajara is quite polarized. While its Northwest area (better known as “Henares Corridor”) is demographically energized because of its migrant population and its closeness to Madrid, the rest of the province (belonging to what is called “Empty Spain”) is under continuous ageing and population loss. As a general feature, only foreign people are offsetting the province’s depopulation. Migrant workers and families are mainly located at Henares Corridor, but there’s some prevalence of temporary agrarian jobs at rural areas.

Castille La Mancha region

Population of Castilla La Mancha grows very slow-paced thanks to the arrival of migrants, being the provinces of Guadalajara and Toledo the ones that lead this increase. The phenom of temporary agrarian work has a lot of significance in the region. In this sense, many press narratives echo the exploitation conditions suffered by migrants. A bleeding example is the existence of shanty towns in Albacete where hundreds of migrant workers stay during the agricultural campaigns without access to basic goods and services.

Journalistic articles also register a light increase of xenophobic discourses between local population. The main reasons for this rise are the strength of some anti-immigration political actors and the problems derived of their marginality and exclusion conditions. These negative discourses are mostly focused on Maghreb and sub-Saharan migration, which is deeply connected with racist viewpoints that certain political and institutional sectors try to take advantage of.

San Bartolomé de la Torre

San Bartolomé de la Torre

The production of written press reports does not reflect the significant proportion of the foreign background population, being the voices of newcomers noticeably absent from the sources of information that build the news. Nevertheless, both interviews and press collect narratives that emphasize the link between immigration and emigration, especially in the discourses of people of national origin.

The news addressing traditional events and festivities for the long-term national-origin inhabitants are frequent, but no mention is made to festivities specific to, for example, the Muslim population (which is very present in the territory), or to any other ethnic background collective. The direct mention of the population of foreign origin is often framed under projects dedicated to the promotion of social cohesion and interculturality, as well as to social support from the third sector.

San Bartolomé de la Torre apuesta por la interculturalidad a través del proyecto 'Humana'

9 octubre 2019



Fig.16

Example of one of the most common news mentioning the migrant population.³⁴

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<https://huelvabuenasnoticias.com/2019/10/09/san-bartolome-de-la-torre-apuesta-por-la-interculturalidad-a-traves-del-proyecto-humana/>

Although the discursive tone is eminently positive, and even there is a patent desire to express a discourse of the multicultural cohabitation as an opportunity of “mutual enrichment”, it is possible to make a subtler reading that links immigrants to the availability of resources or the integration needs. Thus, the tone used in the news regarding immigration in a generic way is predominantly negative, for example, when referring to migrants who come to work in the primary sector. They are described as problematic from the point of view of access to resources by people of national origin (health, etc.) or as a population to be attended to with social aid, but these addresses become more positive when talking about neighbours from other latitudes, where narratives about “cultural wealth” are abundant.

However, this bias is not so marked on the interviews carried out during the fieldwork. The words neighbours (“vecinos/as”) predominate, and although a utilitarian type of discourse can be appreciated – which is typical of the entire Spanish state –, the descriptions are more balanced and tend to a more equalitarian discourse.

Huelva Province

The issue of depopulation has become increasingly important at the political and media debate in the province, with a special incidence in the smaller municipalities.

Regarding to the migration issue, the importance of seasonal workers in agricultural campaigns – such as the strawberry – season is very high, even though hiring at source is not as voluminous as the activity would require. This group is highly subjected to precarious living and working conditions; many of them live on illegal settlements and lack access to the resources needed for a dignified life.

An interesting challenge for the province is the combination of the phenomenon of Huelva countryside’s depopulation with the issue of seasonal workers who remain in the province under very poor material conditions and without the possibility of being able to work in other areas. In this sense, some efforts have been made by both national and regional/local administrations.

The Spanish government approved in July a new reform of “Reglamento de Extranjería” –which is the main legal text regulating rights and obligations of foreigners – that aims to give a bigger stability and improve the situation of those who are being called “circular migrants”, a very common picture in Huelva’s agrobusiness. The present year is the first in which a new strategy on the “collective management of hiring at source” has been developed across the whole country. The Secretary of State for Migrations has been leading a process of coordination between administrations and companies in order to acquire a more efficient attention to the needs of those who want to work at agricultural campaigns in Spain and of the business organizations. One of

its main goals is to recover pre-pandemic figures on seasonal working – due to scarcity of ‘national’ workers on these precarious sectors–, and Huelva’s idiosyncrasy unfailingly makes itself as one of the most important areas where to implement these programmes.

España contratará a más de 16.000 marroquíes como temporeros dentro de su programa de migración circular



Archivo - Varias temporeras marroquíes en Huelva. - María José López - Europa Press - Archivo

Europa Press EP Social
f t i Newsletter

Publicado: miércoles, 28 septiembre 2022 13:40 @EP_Social

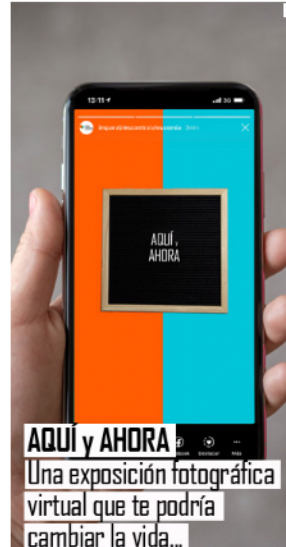


Fig.17

News regarding to the intensification of hiring in origin for seasonal working in 2022.³⁵

35

<https://www.europapress.es/epsocial/migracion/noticia-espana-contratara-mas-16000-marroquies-temporeros-dentro-programa-migracion-circular-20220928134018.html>

Specifically, at provincial and regional levels, some initiatives have been deployed but with a noticeably smaller scope. Most of these have been focused on the formative aspect of those who despite having come here in the first instance to develop seasonal work, have chosen to stay – more or less – indefinitely, as well as on providing basic goods and services to this underprivileged collective. Recently, a short number of new projects have been considering formative actions from the viewpoint of circular migrations, trying to facilitate the learning of skills that allow migrants to start their business and expand their job opportunities in case they decide to go back to their countries of origin when agricultural seasons are over.



Uno de los grupos de mujeres marroquíes que ha recibido la formación.

Fig.18

Example of a formative action targeted to the circular migrants collective.³⁶

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<https://agrodariohuelva.es/50-temporeras-marroquies-terminan-en-huelva-la-formacion-para-emprender-su-negocio-en-marruecos/>

50 temporeras marroquíes terminan en Huelva la formación para emprender su negocio en Marruecos

20 junio, 2022

Andalusia is the most populated region in Spain. Migrant people have a numerically important weight there, especially at urban centres. We infer from newspaper articles and opinion polls that a large proportion of Andalusian society supports the strategy of attracting foreigners to rural areas in order to prevent many towns from decrease, which is a very utilitarian and not useful way to accomplish emplacement purposes standpoint.

On the other hand, media tends to overrepresent the levels of concern that irregular immigration arouse within Andalusians. The arrival of “cayucos” to the coasts, the coexistence issues, and the receipt of public aids by this group get a disproportionate amount of attention, especially by conservative tabloids and mass media –most of them edited in Madrid–. These narratives often use a criminalizing language, which is powerfully striking in a context where xenophobic and hatred discourses are gaining ground in part of the Andalusian society.

Another controversial issue recently amplified by media is citizen security, which migrants are being made responsible for. However, many other administrations and third sector organizations are trying to fight against those narratives. Most of these attempts are targeted to promote cultural activities and training workshops, disregarding other emplacement policies that allow migrants to get out of precariousness.

Final Remarks

The adoption of narratives on depopulation and reception of newcomers varies across the seven analysed localities. Arenillas and Camañas rely discursively in both topics, Burela and Celanova mostly address the presence of foreigners or fail to mix both topics, and Molina de Aragón focuses on depopulation, while Quintana Redonda and San Bartolomé de la Torre would barely align with any of the two discursive patterns. In line with national analyses, the sources used by journalists to support their line of argumentation are usually institutional (public administration), experts in the field (academics) and occasionally third sector. The representation of migrants in positions of authority, as spokespersons or on behalf of more than oneself, is scarce.

In most localities, with the possible exceptions of Arenillas, Camañas and Burela, welcome initiatives go rather unnoticed by the media, being usually more visible through social networks – although being often indirectly depicted–. It could be argued, therefore, that there is a certain degree of

unawareness of their existence, and their lack of embeddedness in local narratives could, in turn, hinder them from being valorised.

Both press and interview analysis show that the discursive formulas identified across the cases underlie the ideas of “growth” (looking at the future) and/or “recovery” (looking at the past) regarded as the only final objective, failing to consider the sustainability of the locality under other possible scenarios; scenarios that sometimes the municipalities are already implementing, but not introducing in their discourse. Some examples are the “seasonality” that shows Quintana Redonda, understood as the adaptation to different amounts of population in different times of the year that contributes to economic viability, or the “specialization” of the municipality like the initial plan of Celanova to become attractive to the elderly that seek caring services.

“Depopulation”, the Spanish term used to describe shrinkage, is consistently depicted as a problem across territories and interviews; however, the frame ranges from revitalization to shrinkage. Molina de Aragón shows the most paradigmatic focus on shrinkage, where comparisons with “Siberia” and “Laponia” or the use of vocabulary linked to remoteness – like the term “deserts” – prevail, complemented with a discourse rooted in pessimism about the future. An example of the opposite term in the dichotomic discourse frame “revitalization-shrinkage” would be represented by Arenillas, that uses depopulation as the point of departure to describe situations of triumph and “survival” of the village filled with hope. What makes this comparison even more interesting is the fact that the two municipalities lie not so far apart geographically. It would be interesting to analyse the implications of the production of these differential narratives on, according to testimonies in Camañas, the “self-esteem” of the municipalities and their perceptions of their capacity for action. In this sense, it could be argued that the participation and involvement of local people in collective, public and political activities generate a sense of community that could also be affecting the construction of more optimistic narratives.

Still, the narratives can hide deep incoherences, such as the reasoning behind the repopulation mechanisms. Press reports about successful strategies to gain repopulate coexist with the continuous out-migration of youngsters living on the same locality; and yet, the discourses assure that the future of the village is guaranteed either by the presence of children or by the presence of migrants. Nonetheless, the structural issues that cause young people to leave – or migrants to re-emigrate – are not brought into discussion; in most cases it is just addressed as a “lack of attractiveness”. A deeper analysis of the argumentation inevitably leads to jeopardizing the long-term vision of the shrinking areas, as it is hardly part of the reasoning that these newcomer children, as they grow up, are likely to leave the village or that newcomer migrants may bear the possibility of re-emigration, all of that conforming a general view that tends towards immobility. Thus, key elements like the population’s accommodation dynamism are hardly considered; all the opposite, relocations are often described in press as finalistic, contradicting the testimonies collected during fieldwork and concealing the mobile lives of rural inhabitants.

The general tone used to describe stories that focus on rural migration is

positive on these localities, or at least favourable to their presence as inhabitants. However, the migrant rural population is barely mentioned when the news report about almost all the topics unrelated to depopulation. The consideration of migrants as an active and emplaced part of local communities varies. There are some examples that give a positive answer to this question. Very small localities, such as Arenillas or Camañas, need the arrival of migrants to maintain public services, so locals seem to welcome migrants with open arms. The small size of these municipalities also facilitates greater participation by migrants in the social life of the town, as they inevitably must establish cooperative relationships with their neighbours in the face of the lack of many aspects. However, the high rates of family turnover in these places are paradoxical; those who arrive to live in these small municipalities do not tend to settle down in the long term, moving to more dynamic urban centres or other regions after some time has passed. On these cases, rather than problems of adaptation – which are also mentioned in some narratives –, it is the alleged lack of prospects – both for the members of active age groups and for the youngest members –, available resources and services the most important motivation for eventual mobility. Other localities, as in the case of Burela and the Cape Verdeans, have large contingents of immigrants who, thanks to the emergence of networks with people of the same origin, end up emplacing themselves into the host community and choosing indefinite permanence as a life project.

On the opposite example, we find those localities where temporary migrations to work in the countryside are a common phenomenon – for example, the rural areas of Huelva and Castilla La Mancha –. There is no shortage of people who, despite being mainly dedicated to agricultural work, live there all year round. However, there seems to be a certain stigma attached to them which, together with the precarious situation they mostly experience, prevents them from being perceived by the locals as equals and as an effective part of the community. Therefore, it can be affirmed that, although in general terms the discourses of long-term national residents and local administrations show sympathy and receptiveness towards the integration of migrants, the experiences of the latter reflect the fact that they do not feel fully included as part of the local social ecosystems, with some exceptions that are more common in smaller municipalities.

In short, representations of the different migrant “collectives” do not correspond to an univocal narrative typology. Once again, as in the interviews, there are certain “preferences” and “sympathies” towards certain origins and administrative status, existing even gendered preferences. Thus, we see cases of educational centres describing similar situations – the arrival of non-national pupils – in different tones; for example, the arrival of children of Ukrainian origin as “a learning opportunity” and the arrival of Moroccan children as “posing great difficulties”:



11. Yasmin y Fida, las hijas de Said y Omieitoun de 12 y ocho años. La semana pasada en la escuela de Vistado. Otros hijos de inmigrantes extranjeros comparten con ellas aula en el Centro Rural Agrupado, una estructura de educación infantil y primaria que reúne a niños de diferentes edades en la misma clase. "Aquí nos integramos todos, es difícil pero también bonito", dice una de las maestras.

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El primer día de colegio en Celanova para diez alumnos ucranianos: «Los niños se van a sentir muy bien y con ganas de aprender»

FINA ULLOA / MAITE RODRÍGUEZ
OURENSE / LA VOZ



MIGUEL VILLAR

Fig.19

Comparative representation of arrival of children of migrant origin in rural schools in Camañas (top, from Morocco) and Celanova (down, from Ucrania).³⁷

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https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/03/17/album/1489744907_963816.html#foto_gal_11 and <https://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/noticia/ourense/2022/09/08/primer-dia-colegio-celanova-diez-alumnos-ucranianos-ninos-van-sentir-bien-ganas-apren>

The conclusions with which we end this brief preliminary report led us to ask ourselves about the interconnections between the narratives drawn from the press and from the interviews with the neighbours. We found that, in most of the cases, the discourses coincide. What influences the most? Are the voices represented the ones that make their way into the words of the people who inhabit the place? Do the discourses on the ground have any similarities among them when they differ from the “mainstream” representations?

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THE NETHERLANDS

Author
Jofelle Tesorio

Introduction



Fig. 1

Composite photo of major Dutch newspapers.

The media can encourage understanding and support as well as ignorance, discrimination, and domination. (Silverstone & Georgiou, 2005, in Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2015: 381) and it can also foster a sense of certainty and belonging and provide opportunities to formulate social reforms (Ibid: 380). Through media “relations are created and sustained. Prejudices likewise.” (Ibid:380). As part of the overarching Welcoming Spaces project across five participating countries in Europe, an analysis was conducted to study the portrayal in the media of migration, migrants, shrinking regions, and welcoming spaces; how welcoming they are, and who holds the power in the narratives. The Netherlands has a long-held tradition of sober media coverage that adheres to ethical journalistic standards and fair practices (Brants & van Praag, 2014). Compared to other countries, tabloid journalism is frowned upon, although the coverage of populist sentiments has been gaining traction in recent years among media outfits that are known to be right-leaning and on social media run and followed by populists. Individual journalists (and news media) are slightly politicised (tendency to lean to one or the other political direction), but ultimately, they are obliged to the common good of society (Ibid.). The mainstream media are mostly labelled as centrist, right-centrist, conservative-populist, liberal-left or liberal but not associated with any political party or groups.

Public broadcasting is well-respected with a strong tradition of substantive reporting, and public trust in news media is still relatively high (van der Wurff & Schoenbach, 2014). The Pew Research Centre (2018), a leading media think-tank, reported that four in 10 Dutch adults believe the news media are very important while two-thirds trust the media. In the Pew survey, 43% consider the news media very important to society while 67% say they trust the news media (Ibid.). When it comes to sources, the Pew Centre adds that the divides between adults with and without populist leanings are not strong. In comparison, southern countries in Europe tend to have larger divides in main news source preference between people on the left and right of the ideological spectrum than between those with and without populist views. “In the Netherlands, those on the left and right do not differ regarding the media source they turn to most for news. Both those on the left and the right are most

likely to name Nederlandse Publieke Omroep (NPO), the public broadcaster, as their main news source, followed by NU.nl” (Ibid.), a news website owned by Flanders-based DPG media.

The country is not a recent migration destination, therefore, coverage of migration issues, and the discourses have always been high but fluid. Investigative and in-depth reports on migrants, citing various sources and different points of views, are regularly produced especially by the mainstream media such as Trouw¹, NRC² and De Volkskrant³.

In recent years, due to the influx of a large number of asylum seekers to Europe, widely termed as the asielcrisis (asylum crisis), the debates and discourses have centred on one group of migrants – the asielzoekers (asylum seekers or refugees).⁴

On the other hand, welcoming spaces/initiatives are generally viewed positively because they are considered to help revitalise communities, foster camaraderie, bridge locals and newcomers and are go-to organisations/ places for many people – from pensioners who are looking for activities to a newcomer who is navigating the bureaucratic system of integration (see also Younes, Y., 2021). But the perception of society and media portrayal are two different things, therefore, it is important to investigate how narratives are created and controlled in the public sphere.

Methodology

This media analysis, conducted between October 2022 and January 2023, examined at least 25 articles published on national and local media in the Netherlands that reported on migration, 25 articles related to shrinking areas/ regions, and 25 articles that dwelled into welcoming initiatives for newcomers within a timeframe of 10 years (2013-2022).

Qualitative rather than quantitative method was used. Each article was analysed using the four dominant frames on migration: human interest, threat, governance, and economic (Dekker & Scholten, 2015).

The articles reviewed were narrowed down from a long list of 100 articles pertaining to migrants and migration, from 50 articles pertaining to shrinking areas, and from 50 articles relating to welcoming initiatives. The decision to narrow down to 25 articles per topic was to make room for a more focused discussion related to specific event within the 10-year timeframe (such as the ‘asylum crisis’ in the last 2 years and the Ukrainian refugees during the last year). The chosen 25 articles each theme were also distributed among major national and regional media namely: De Volkskrant, Trouw, NOS, De Telegraaf, NRC, Algemeen Dagblad (AD), and Dagblad van het Noorden (DVHN). For the discussions on welcoming spaces/initiatives, mostly local media were analysed and only a few from the national media (AD, Volkskrant) because of the lack of national media coverage on local welcoming initiatives. Among the local media analysed were: destentor.nl, limburg.nl, middelburgers.nl, nieuwsuitberkelland.nl, omroepthogeland.nl, OmroepZeeland.nl, dvhn.nl, RTVNoord.nl, nieuws.nl, and Leeuwarder Courant (lc.nl).

Very often, websites of welcoming spaces/initiatives offer very general, minimal,

1

The story of sisters from Angola who came who came as unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands. After years of endless appeals and staying in the asylum center, they are now adults but still without papers. (Accessed from [trouw.nl Angelese zussen Gloria \(26\) en Maura \(24\) zitten na tien jaar procederen nog steeds in Ter Apel](https://trouw.nl/Angelese-zussen-Gloria-(26)-en-Maura-(24)-zitten-na-tien-jaar-procederen-nog-steeds-in-Ter-Apel) on 10 December 2022).

2

An investigative report by the Trouw on what happens behind the walls of a reception center where ‘difficult’ asylum seekers are placed. (Accessed from [NRC.nl Wat gebeurt er achter de muren van het ‘aso-azc’ in Hoogeveen? - NRC](https://nrc.nl/Wat-gebeurt-er-achter-de-muren-van-het-'aso-azc'-in-Hoogeveen?-NRC) on 10 December 20122).

3

A special report on a long-neglected village due to windmills and other ‘development’ projects that led to shrinkage (accessed from [volkskrant.nl Dorpsbewoners Oudeschip vrezen dat gemeente en provincie de inwoners aan hun lot overlaten](https://volkskrant.nl/Dorpsbewoners-Oudeschip-vrezen-dat-gemeente-en-provincie-de-inwoners-aan-hun-lot-overlaten) on 01 December 2022).

4

On 08 July 2023, at a time when this report was being revised, the Dutch government led by Prime Minister Mark Rutte collapsed due to immigration policy dispute. Rutte’s centre-right VVD party has proposed limiting entrance for the children of refugees who are already in the country and making families wait for at least two years before they can be united. Coalition partners, mostly seen as pro-migrants, didn’t agree to the proposal of VVD. (accessed from <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/07/08/europe/netherlands-government-collapse-immigration-policy-intl-hnk/index.html> on 10 July 2023).

or partial understanding of their scope, activities and the actors involved. We also included other online and social media contents to understand how local actors present and frame their initiatives in relation to broader questions about migration and the revitalisation of shrinking regions. A handful of initiatives have gained media attention (regional and local) and those that landed in the media more often were the ones that were more visible or invited the media to witness the initiatives. In these cases, deeper and lengthier analysis had been devoted.

Reframing the Narratives and Limitations

Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue (Chong, 2007). Crisis and burden frames are often used to analyse migration but Dekker and Scholten (2015) identified four dominant frames: a human-interest frame, a threat frame, a governance frame, and an economic frame. For this study, human interest, governance (political) and economic frames have been adapted from Dekker and Scholten. Socio-cultural framing is also included because many of the welcoming initiatives focus on social well-being and stability, which are usually citizen- or civil-society initiatives. Moreover, in a study by Konings & Notten (2021), they found out that when refugees are presented in a positive light this was often in combination with frames that victimise refugees, emphasising their plight rather than their potential for local communities. In contrast, most local media in the Netherlands tend to highlight the (potential) contribution of newcomers, refugees and other migrants to the local economy and community, as echoed by those who run the welcoming initiatives, and local political and economic leaders. Yet, quite extensively, the focus in the past years has been diluted to a particular group of migrants – the *asielzoekers* (referring to asylum seekers from outside the European Union) who have been described to come en masse (massal) or like a flood (*asielstroom*).

This media analysis focuses on political framing, economic framing, and socio-cultural framing, which are adapted from the scholarly use of (forced) migration framings. Lastly, this analysis has also considered the tendency of the media to respect frame ownership and report accordingly (see Hänggeli & Kriesi, 2010).

While this media analysis investigates the narratives on migration, migrants, shrinking areas and welcoming initiatives in focused areas, this does not include what audiences make of news items or meanings they take away from

such texts (Hall, 1997 in Hodgetts and Chamberlain, 2015, p 383) because news items do not hold, contain, or convey as single set of meanings (Ibid.). Interviews with journalists, newsroom managers and readers were also not part of the analysis.

Discussions

Framing and Beyond: Narratives on Migration and Migrants

There is no dominant frame to migration in the Netherlands. The frames (and labelling in the media) sometimes depend on the categories of migrants (e.g. asylum-seekers, refugees, status holders, safe landers, temporary guests, guest workers, seasonal workers, undocumented, irregular, knowledge workers, international talents, expatriates, students, etc). The discourses and debates are often framed around politics, culture, economics, and human interest. The media often parrots or reprints the framing and discourses used by politicians, experts, or other groups (NGOs, volunteer organisations).

In the last decades, there has been a focus on the ‘integration paradox’. Receiving a permanent residence permit is dependent on passing the so-called ‘citizenship exams’ that test knowledge of Dutch languages and norms and values (Joppke, 2007). The ‘citizenship exams’ are now broadly called inburgeringsexamen (social integration exams), which include navigation of the job market. One of the newspapers, Algemeen Dagblad (AD), known to be without identity and neutral, cited a report by the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) that the longer Dutch people with a migration background spend in the Netherlands and the more they become an active part of society, the more they experience discrimination and feel gloomier about the political climate. “More participation means more exposure to exclusion, for example in the labour market or in education. With the second generation (born and raised in the Netherlands), integration, racism, and Islam are still concerns that limit opportunities, and they feel they need to reclaim their space and not be judged based on their migration background.”⁵

⁶The integration of migrants is often framed through a multicultural, political, and human-interest lens. By citing experts, survey results and lived experiences of migrants on climbing the integration ladder, an understanding is provided about the politics of an integration policy that is often seen as a one-way street. The integration narratives are controlled by the migrants, experts, and politicians.

However, in the case of statushouders (status holders)⁶, the process of integration is more complex, problematic, and bureaucratic. The discourse in the media is often produced by local officials, social workers, and NGOs. A report by the Telegraaf, known as right-centre and populist, covered a city

5

[Hoe beter geïntegreerd, hoe somberder over gastvrijheid](#)
Nederland | Binnenland | AD.nl
(accessed on 10 November 2022).

6

Former asylum seekers who are granted refugee status and given the right to stay and work in the Netherlands.

Studie: sta asielzoekers veel sneller toe te gaan werken

Een snelle integratie van asielzoekers voorkomt niet alleen langdurige werkloosheid en criminaliteit, zij stimuleert juist ook terugkeer naar het land van herkomst. Dat is de conclusie van een nieuw onderzoek naar de integratie van de vorige grote groep asielmigranten. De drie belangrijkste bevindingen:

Marjon Bolwijn 5 januari 2016, 02:00



Asielzoekers doen mee aan een Hollandse Koek-en-Zopie schaatsmiddag in De Uithof in Den Haag. Beeld ANP

Discussions

Framing and Beyond: Narratives on Migration and Migrants

From the point of view of the councillor responsible for sustainable transition of status holders, finding and retaining work for them is more difficult because of current regulations. The participatiewet (participation law) requires status holders to find jobs and at the same time participate in an intensive integration process within three years⁷. The article portrayed status holders as not being serious enough to integrate despite being given opportunities by the government to integrate. This framing is paternalistic (see e.g. Kotic, A., & Triandafyllidou, A., 2006) and leads to the 'othering' of migrants (see Paré, C., 2022). The same article cited that status holders often remain dependent on a benefit, which connotes assistentialism (see e.g. Villa, 2021). "More than half of adult former asylum seekers are still out of work 6.5 years after being recognised as refugees." While this might be a fact, another article referring

Fig.2

Skating as a form of integration? In this story on integration at the Volkskrant, the headline reads: "Allow asylum seekers to work much faster".

7

Utrecht: [werk statushouders loont onvoldoende | Binnenland | Telegraaf.nl](https://www.telegraaf.nl) (accessed on 15 November 2022).

to this phenomenon used the headline “Veel statushouders jaren in uitkering: middlevinger naar belastingbetaler” (Many status holders years in benefits: ‘Middle finger to the taxpayer’).⁸ The headline was a direct quote from an interview but it was used as clickbait for the readers and denoted a negative framing of recognised refugees (status holders) who are seen as opportunistic and taking advantage of the resources from the taxpayers money. On top of the headline, it read: “work is crucial for integration”. This burden framing (rather than benefit) is being used in the media quite often when referring to asylum seekers and refugees. A quote from a resident living near the asylum seekers’ reception centre (AZC) in Ter Apel, Groningen province, cited by an article in the Volkskrant, a liberal, centre-left leaning paper, reinforces this framing: “Then I see all these men my age lying in the grass. Why are they not working, I think. I get out of bed at six in the morning, don’t I? That’s the mentality here, working hard six days a week, then you can achieve something in life.”⁹ On the other hand, the public broadcaster NOS carried interviews with Eritrean and Somalian migrants to investigate integration concerns and understand their personal circumstances.¹⁰ However, political and victimisation framing are still often used where migrants are seen as hapless victims lacking agency because of bureaucracy. The ‘othering’ of migrants, in particular asylum seekers is being played in this context, pitting the ‘hard working Dutch’ against the ‘lazy’ or ‘opportunistic’ asylum seeker.

8

[Veel statushouders jaren in uitkering: ‘Middelvinger naar belastingbetaler’ | Binnenland | Telegraaf.nl](#) (accessed on 14 November 2022).

9

[Albergen woest over komst azc: ‘Als het zo slecht is in het land waaruit je gevlucht bent, kun je dat beetje regen hier toch ook wel aan?’ \(volkskrant.nl\)](#) (accessed on 14 November 2022).

10

[Zorgen om integratie Eritrese vluchtelingen \(nos.nl\)](#) (accessed 20 November 2022).



The asielcrisis (asylum seekers crisis) has dominated the news over recent years since the civil war in Syria broke out in 2015. In 2022, the coverage of the asielcrisis has reached an all-time high after images and videos of asylum seekers sleeping in tents and in sleeping bags on the grass, getting soaked in the rain outside the accommodation buildings of the AZC were circulated. Again, crisis framing is used in this context. Although the shortage of accommodation for asylum seekers had already been reported in 2015, little was done to address it. When the Russian aggression in Ukraine started in February 2022, followed by millions of Ukrainians seeking refuge from European countries, the asielcrisis became a national crisis. The media used political and economic framing on how the Dutch government has mishandled

the crisis, partly blaming the government for the funding and capacity problems of the Centralised Reception Authority (COA) and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). The different parties, mayors, local officials, and organisations responsible for handling the flow of refugees couldn't agree on a solution. The framing in the media is one of shared problem or burden and not of shared responsibility, and the narratives are controlled by national and local politicians.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing Russian aggression in Ukraine where more than 90,000 Ukrainians (UNHCR, 2023) were received in the Netherlands (higher than the total number of almost 60,000 asylum seekers from other countries), the media coverage has focused on the long-standing tension between municipalities and the Randstad (big and affluent cities like Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht and other metropolitan area cities) where most political decisions emanate (conflict framing). Mayors, local officials, and residents of villages complain of being overburdened by hosting asylum seeker centres for a long time without the provision of substantial support and incentives, or even consulting residents (burden framing). The media highlighted the tension in villages. One example is the coverage of Albergen, a village with about 3,500 inhabitants in the province of Twente. The media attention panned to Albergen when the Cabinet gave the COA the authority to establish an asylum seekers' centre by buying a hotel that will house 150 to 300 residents.



Fig.3

“From big ambition to paper tiger”: A special report in the Volkskrant about the Dutch government's mishandling of the asylum crisis. The photo shows asylum seekers sleeping on the grass.

“Albergen furious about the arrival of the AZC: ‘If it’s so bad in the country from which you fled, you can handle that little bit of rain here, can’t you?’”, read a headline in the Volkstrant. A direct quote in the headline is often used as clickbait but in this case, it showed who controlled the narrative, the residents who feel ‘aggrieved’ that their harmonious village will be swamped by vreemdelingen (foreigners). The story described the sense of community in the village “where residents send each other a message in the neighbourhood app when a group of strangers walk down the street in the evening.” The interviews with residents resonated fear of the arrival of the asylum seekers. “Everyone contributes here. It is precisely this solidarity that will come under pressure if the village will soon consist of 10 percent asylum seekers,” one resident was quoted as saying. Another said: “something like that close to a small village, that doesn’t fit, does it?... Why does it all have to be in our neighbourhood? Send them to het Gooi, to Bussum, or to Wassenaar or Rozendaal,” referring to the most affluent enclaves in the Netherlands, a seeming parallel to US Republicans sending immigrants in busloads or planes to immigrant-friendly, Democrats-dominated states. Here, the asylum seekers are represented as objects and strangers whose presence can disrupt the harmony and culture of the village. The ‘othering’ (and criminalisation and burden framing) is seen in this case when people from different cultures or background are treated differently because of an assumption that they won’t fit the norm.

Parallel to the report of the Volkskrant, NOS, the national media, reported a more nuanced story about Albergen where one resident said that she understood the plight of the asylum seekers. “We are social, we can do that, they must embed in society. And that applies not only to Tubbergen, but to the entire country... Make sure that they are included in the culture, that they become members of a football club. Ask employers if they can use them, let them participate. Whichever way you look at it, those people must have a place. Of course, there are fortune seekers among them, but also real refugees.” In this case, humanitarian and cultural framing are used, however, there is also the condition that newcomers must integrate and be part of the culture to be easily accepted. Integration in this manner is imposed in a paternalistic manner.

1. Reporting on forgotten immigrant stories

On the other hand, because of the asielcrisis, the media have begun reporting migration stories that are otherwise forgotten. The special coverage of NRC, a national news media known for its in-depth reports on social issues and often citing studies from experts, and Trouw, seen as a centre-left media and with a

Christian background, provided a human side to the plight of migrants. One story was about what went on behind the ASO-ASZ, the special accommodation of asylum seekers who caused nuisance in a regular asylum seekers' centre. The story established whistle-blower allegations that employees and guards at times used unnecessary force or violence against residents who exhibited 'nuisance behaviours'. Another report was a story about two Angolan sisters who came to the Netherlands as unaccompanied minors 10 years ago. After endless interviews and hearings, they are still stuck in legal limbo and living in the asylum centre without recognised refugee status. The story highlighted the plight of minors who fled their countries, who were often traumatised and stressed because of the way they were interrogated as children and how authorities handled their cases (human interest, victimisation).

While the media coverage on asylum seekers and recognised refugees tends to be more on the neutral to negative side, labour migrants, on the other hand, have more positive representation in the Dutch media. More often, labour migrants are portrayed as a necessity to keep The Netherlands competitive especially in keeping up with the labour-intensive agriculture industry.¹¹ They are also seen as potential contributors to revitalising shrinking regions.

One local councilor in Limburg province said in a survey conducted by public media NOS: "Migrant workers have become indispensable for the North Limburg economy and quality of life...Our ambition is to bind migrant workers to us; we want to entice them to settle permanently in our municipality. This is because we foresee that we will also need extra people in the future."¹²

2. Coverage on Ukrainian refugees

With the arrival of displaced Ukrainians, there have mostly been positive reports in the media about their potential contribution to the labour market after getting special permits to work and live in the Netherlands (political framing). Other asylum applicants, no matter how long they have stayed in the Netherlands, are only allowed to work 24 months a year, and are not qualified to rent or own a house.

The media coverage on the displaced Ukrainians is more compassionate and sympathetic (human interest framing).¹³ Stories about Ukrainians being thankful to The Netherlands hugged headlines in most of 2022.¹⁴ A few articles also questioned the paradox of the temporary protection directive – while giving Ukrainians the privilege to work from day 1, it only affords them little rights in practice.¹⁵

Some stories also espoused complaints and problems being faced by the displaced Ukrainians – from housing conditions to finding jobs to psycho-social issues. During the first few months of the refugee crisis, the media

11

[Dit is hoeveel arbeidsmigranten er zijn in Roosendaal | Roosendaal | AD.nl](#) (accessed on 18 November 2022).

12

[Aantal gemeenten stelt grenzen aan komst arbeidsmigranten \(nos.nl\)](#) (accessed on 15 November 2022).

13

[Hoe gaat het er op de Internationale Schakelklas in Assen aan toe? 'Oekraïense leerlingen staan met één been in thuisland' - Dagblad van het Noorden \(dvh.nl\)](#) (accessed on 20 November 2022).

14

[Zorgen over langdurige opvang Oekraïners, steeds vaker klachten \(nos.nl\)](#) (accessed 15 November 2022).

15

[Speciale status van Oekraïense vluchtelingen pakt paradoxaal uit: ze krijgen sneller werk, maar hebben minder rechten \(volkskrant.nl\)](#) (accessed on 10 February 2023).

extensively reported on the humanitarian aspect of receiving Ukrainians, as well as the quality of reception for them. For example, an NOS article featuring interviews from charitable organisations expressing concerns about long-term reception. “Ukrainians stay with five people in a room of 36 square meters without partitions or partitions and have almost no privacy. The living allowance they receive varies greatly and does not correspond to the guidelines that the government has drawn up for this. There is also insufficient food, residents say. Half a loaf of bread is distributed twice a week per person and once a day an apple or banana and a frozen meal,”¹⁶ read a section of the article in NOS.

However, some opinion pieces questioned the double standard of reception and treatment between asylum seekers from other countries and the Ukrainians.¹⁷

16

Ibidem

17

[‘Een Oekraïner kan over twee dagen beginnen, een asielzoeker over acht weken. Voor wie zal de werkgever kiezen?’ \(volkskrant.nl\)](#) (accessed on 03 February 2023).

de volkskrant

Oekraïners in Nederland zijn nog steeds dankbaar, maar worstelen meer en meer

Zaterdag kwamen Oekraïners in Den Haag bijeen om Nederland hun dankbaarheid te betuigen. Tegelijkertijd nemen mentale problemen allengs toe. Oekraïense psychologen die hun landgenoten kunnen helpen, raken nu zelf ook overspannen.

Jurre van den Berg 10 juli 2022, 17:20



Oekraïense vluchtelingen, moeders en kinderen, luisteren naar het volkslied. Ze

Fig.4

Ukrainians are still thankful but struggling more and more, says the headline in the Volkskrant.

The asylum debate in the Netherlands is dominated by numbers. When the media report on migration, this is often accompanied by the number of migrants, percentages, or the cost of resources needed to provide shelter, facilities, and assistance. The Dutch fascination with numbers extends to coverage of krimpgebieden or shrinking areas. Take for example in this report: “In the shrinking area of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, the number of inhabitants decreased in Sluis and Terneuzen. But Hulst got some people back. The number of inhabitants in that region fell by 46 to 105,595. Walcheren and the Bevelanden/Tholen grew with 133 and 425 inhabitants. There are now 114,446 people living on Walcheren and 128,274 on the Bevelanden/Tholen.”¹⁸ Numbers usually provide context into which direction shrinking areas are heading, both positive and negative. The increase in number of inhabitants is often attributed to migration.

Shrinking areas are often the focus of the media and in public debates but a dominant narrative is not very apparent. Various actors - national politicians, local officials, experts, and residents – control the narratives. Some reports describe shrinking areas in terms of losing valuable resources and missing services such as “schools closing”, “disappearing socio-cultural facilities”, “demolishing houses”, “stagnating development”, “depopulation process”, “ageing population”, “rotting”, “losing socio-cultural backbone”, or “feeling of being trapped”, “powerless feeling”, “no right to exist”. A few residents in shrinking areas have blamed the Hague (the seat of government) for imposing on them a kind of development that affects their own existence. One example is the village of Oudeschip in North Groningen which currently has 120 residents. The once vibrant village on reclaimed land behind a dike had the last of its three schools closed in 1984 and has since battled to stay even without the facilities close by. In a special report, the Volkskrant rightly put it: “It was the sum total: the poor housing market in shrinking areas, the earthquakes, the coal-fired power station, the waste mountains of Pouw, high-voltage pylons, a heliport and soon also wind turbines in front of them. Villagers were afraid of nuisance and of their houses becoming even more unsellable.”¹⁹

In many articles, shrinking areas are represented in a nostalgic perspective (“sense of community”, “melancholy”, “space”, “relaxing”, “freedom”, “once vibrant”) yet there is also a sense of hope where shrinking areas have active agency of territories (“not giving up”, “don’t put your hands up in the air”, “fight back”, “new life”, “new forms of living”, “dynamism”, “opportunities”, “new solutions”, “creative solutions”, “unconventional solutions”, “tailor-made solutions”, “unburdening arrangement”).²⁰

Of late, officials and businessmen who want to avoid using krimpgebieden (shrinking areas) or ‘krimpregios’ (shrinking regions) have been featured

18

[Zeeuws-Vlaanderen loses 46 inhabitants | Zeeland | AD.nl](#) (accessed on 17 November 2022).

19

[Dorpsbewoners Oudeschip vrezen dat gemeente en provincie de inwoners aan hun lot overlaten \(volkskrant.nl\)](#) (accessed 20 November 2022).

20

[Waarom sturen we statushouders niet allemaal naar Limburg? | De Volkskrant](#) (accessed on 15 November 2022).



▲ Archiefoto: Poolse seizoenskrachten aan het werk bij tomatenkweker Lans in Rilland. © WACONimages

Zeeland krimpt? Onzin, bevolking groeit tot 2040 dankzij arbeidsmigranten

MIDDELBURG - Zeeland krimpgebied? Vergeet dat maar. Uit de nieuwste voorspellingen blijkt dat het aantal inwoners tot 2040 blijft groeien tot bijna 400.000. Dat is vooral te danken aan de komst van arbeidsmigranten.

in the media. There is a growing call to stop using krimpregios (shrinking regions) because they connote negative branding and if used more often will not attract new residents and investments. The anti krimpregios want the narrative to focus on 'dynamism' and regiobranding (regional branding) that will promote the positive values and opportunities in shrinking areas and regions. For them, regiobranding is the counterattack against the term 'shrinking region', the brand that has embedded itself in the minds of The Hague (national politicians). This kind of branding narrative is controlled by the local executives and businessmen and a few residents. As mayor Paul Depla of Heerlen put it: "Admittedly, there is a substantial mortality surplus - there are more hearses than cribs - and South Limburg is one of the most ageing regions... But the young people are not leaving, the group of young

people in their twenties is steadily rising.”²¹ The focus of this narrative is on incentives and opportunities. If more social houses are built, right investments in the region, and with the national government redistributing the resources outside of the Randstad (bigger affluent cities), young people and migrants will come.²²

The media also extensively covered stories about areas that have been revitalised because of migration. For example, in Limburg where after the turn of the century, the area was flooded by Polish and other Eastern European seasonal workers. The newcomers were generally warmly welcomed and were desperately needed in asparagus fields. “They brought new life to the villages that were struggling with shrinkage and ageing: schools and other facilities could stay open longer.” Media coverage of positive stories like this also put migration in perspective, which is not the only contributing factor to reverse the adverse effects of demographic developments associated with shrinkage. It also involves overhauling outdated laws. “I also hear these noises from the Randstad: let status holders go to shrinking areas, because there is enough empty space there. Problem solved. But it’s not that easy. We want to make our contribution, but we often encounter rigid laws and regulations,” Limburg provincial administrator Daan Prevoe was quoted as saying in the Volkskrant.²³

21

[Met 'Limburg voor de Limburgers' | Trouw](#) (Accessed on 15 November 2022).

22

[Opinie: Vergeet de dure wensen van de Randstad, investeer snel weer in de buitengewesten \(volkskrant.nl\)](#) (accessed 15 November 2022).

23

[Waarom sturen we statushouders niet allemaal naar Limburg? | De Volkskrant](#) (accessed on 15 November 2022).



Fig.5

From Algemeen Dagblad (AD): “Zeeland shrinks? Nonsense, population grows till 2022, thanks to labour migrants.”

The media coverage on welcoming spaces is mostly relegated to regional and local newspapers. For example, Dagblad van het Noorden (DvhN), a regional daily newspaper published and circulated in the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe in the northeastern Netherlands, often features local welcoming initiatives especially by migrants themselves.²⁴

In the national media, initiatives by residents and migrants in shrinking regions, especially in smaller villages, are seldom covered. If there are reports on welcoming initiatives, they are mostly in the Randstad (cities like Utrecht, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague).²⁵ The national media tend to focus on initiatives by the national government such as the Taskforce Work and Integration for Refugees that started in 2016. The aim of the initiative, done in collaboration with the municipalities, is to get thousands of migrants into work and out of social assistance more quickly.²⁶ Sporadically, there are also features on local initiatives outside cities for migrants such the one initiated by the language group ContourdeTwern in the municipality of Waalwijk in North Brabant province. Migrants are often receivers of these initiatives but have less participation in creating them.²⁷

Local welcoming initiatives are mostly found on websites or brochures of municipalities or provinces and their partner organisations. At the very least, the national media cite local initiatives in stories that talk about migrant integration such as the²⁸ internship programme for status holders in the province of Gelderland and the creation of Mexeana Foundation founded by a former Eritrean asylum seeker. The aim of this foundation is to get Dutch volunteers and Eritrean refugees together to ensure that Eritrean refugees can participate more quickly in the Dutch society.²⁹ Meanwhile, churches are often portrayed as a welcoming space for migrants, not only as places for worship and cultural activities, but offering them various assistance – from language classes to guiding young people in their career options.³⁰ The framing on welcoming initiatives is often humanitarian, cultural, economic, and political, while narratives are mostly controlled by local officials and socio-civic organisations/church leaders putting up the initiatives.

24

[‘Hier wonen is niet vrijblijvend’ - Dagblad van het Noorden \(dvh.nl\)](#) (accessed on 20 November 2022).

25

[In de Bijlmer komt The Passion thuis | De Volkskrant](#) (accessed on 19 November 2022).

26

[More and more initiatives to help refugees find work \(nos.nl\)](#) (accessed 19 November 2022).

27

<https://www.ad.nl/waalwijk/met-polen-mee-op-nederlandse-les-in-waalwijk-prachtig-om-zelf-dingen-te-kunnen-vragen-in-de-supermarkt~a96041e4/> (accessed on 20 November).

28

<https://www.trouw.nl/economie/kansen-op-werk-nemen-toe-voor-statushouders~b2658f93/> (accessed on 18 November 2022).

29

[Zorgen om integratie Eritrese vluchtelingen \(nos.nl\)](#) (accessed on 20 November 2022).

30

<https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/kerken-bevorderen-participatie-migranten~ba72cac3/> (accessed on 18 November 2022).



▲ Pool Alan (midden) krijgt taalles. © Michel Koster

Met Polen mee op Nederlandse les in Waalwijk: 'Prachtig om zelf dingen te kunnen vragen in de supermarkt'

WAALWIJK - Hoe laat je arbeidsmigranten zich thuis voelen in Waalwijk? Kennis van de Nederlandse taal kan flink helpen. Vrijwilligers van de taalgroepen van ContourdeTwern schieten te hulp.

Michel Koster 06-08-19, 11:29 Bron: BD

Fig.6

A story on Algemeen Dagblad. With the Polish joining Dutch class in Waalwijk: "Wonderful to be able to ask for yourself things at the supermarket."

1. Welcoming initiatives selection

During the first phase, the Welcoming Spaces project conducted a quick scan of welcoming initiatives across the country. In the second phase, the project zoomed in to welcoming initiatives in nine selected municipalities, which were selected based on two criteria: the areas have been formally designated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2018 a shrinking region or anticipated shrinking region with population ageing and a selective outward mobility of young people, and the presence of one or several welcoming initiatives within them. From this, 18 welcoming initiatives (see table 1) were chosen in the municipalities of Nederweert, Middelburg, Smallerland,

Gulpen, Sittard-Geleen, and Hulst. These municipalities are in six provinces: Groningen, Friesland, Gelderland, Limburg, Noord-Brabant, and Zeeland. The welcoming initiatives included in this study cover a broad range of actors, objectives, and impacts. The scope of the welcoming initiatives differs, some focus on inclusive measures for migrant newcomers, others are oriented towards all local community members. Several initiatives have been around for many years, while others have only recently been initiated. (Miellet, et.al., Netherlands Country Report, Welcoming Spaces, 2022).

Municipality/ Province	N° of welcoming initiatives	Name initiative
Het Hogeland (Groningen)	2	Colourful Het Hogeland , Vakland Hogeland
Smallingerland (Friesland)	1	Partisan Medical Mercenaries
Berkelland (Achterhoek)	4	Newcomers in the Care , Culture Connectors , Samen Achterhoek , Language House East Achterhoek
Gulpen-Wittern (South-Limburg)	1	Life Next to the Brewery
Heerlen (South-Limburg)	1	WOOW
Nederweert (Central-Limburg)	1	Link Nederweert
Sittard-Geleen (Central-Limburg)	3	Into Care, To Be Care Free (IDZ/UDZ) , Provincial Platform for Diversity (PPD) and Foundation More Colour and Quality (SMKK)
Hulst (Zeeland Flanders)	2	Tragel Care , Vogelwaarde Helpt Elkaar
Middelburg (Zeeland)	3	SIREE , STAR , Language Café de Herberg

Tab.1

Selected Welcoming Initiatives in the Netherlands (Country Report 2022).

2. Political framing

This framing is used as a lens to analyse how regional or local actors, individuals, or organisations, with or without interest in politics, convey their messages regarding welcoming initiatives and whose outcomes might have political implications (see Chong, 2007, on framing). For example, the Netherlands, which is one of the countries that has been associated traditionally with a state-centric approach to migrant integration, has witnessed a 'local turn' in terms of increasing involvement of the local level (Scholten 2013), that we now refer to as welcoming spaces or initiatives. One way or another, the localisation of migrant integration or initiatives cannot escape a political framing.

In relation to the framing of migration, mayors have sought to reassure residents, and have pushed for frames that emphasise collective action and shared responsibilities. The formats differ; some mayors are active on social media (e.g. Twitter), others write columns or public letters of support

on particular occasions, such as the opening of new refugee shelters. At the same time, they draw attention to and ‘champion’ local welcoming initiatives. Refugee rights and welfare organisations also play an important role in shaping local discourses. In some localities, they have also sought to influence public opinion by collecting first-hand accounts of refugee newcomers in the municipality (Miellet, et.al., Netherlands Country Report, Welcoming Spaces, 2022). Local political officials often praise and draw attention to local initiatives, as illustrated by the following quotes:

*“These past months, there has been a huge appeal to the community. With the help of 100 volunteers, we have shown what ‘Gastvrij Geleen’ (Hospitable Geleen) means. Now we are giving Glanerbrook back to the athletes and sports clubs. I am proud of how everyone has worked so hard to make it possible for people who are fleeing to still be safely accommodated here.”*³¹

Mayor of Sittard-Geleen

*“Colourful Het Hogeland does more than just promote the integration of status holders, namely connecting our residents with our new residents in a broad sense. In doing so, they improve the broad well-being of Het Hogeland.”*³²

Bernd de Jong, municipal councillor of Het Hogeland and ChristenUnie local party chair

It is worth noting that many welcoming initiatives, although run by volunteers, are getting much of their funding from local and regional governments because some programs are intertwined with local policies to achieve implementation of local government competencies, such as civic integration, or local economic policy framework. Many initiatives also address local and regional challenges that result from shrinkage, which is a concern of the government. It is not surprising that politics plays a role in the existence of welcoming initiatives. For example, Colourful Het Hogeland, a citizen-initiated social organisation for integration that provides support for newcomers - from international meetings and dialogues about culture and diversity to information in schools, workshops, and creative spaces. When news³⁴ came out in 2020 that the Het Hogeland municipality will stop its subsidy, local news sites (4 out of 8 articles reviewed) devoted articles about the issue of funding. This had been covered widely by the local and regional media. One online article³⁵ republished the contents of an email from the municipality to the board of the foundation:

“On 7 April 2020, the Executive Board decided that the services provided to status holders up to the new Civic Integration Act, which is expected to take effect on 1 July 2021, must be continued in a very reduced manner. This has everything to do with the financial situation of the municipality and the fact that the government does not make sufficient resources available to intensively support the current group of status holders. As a result, I regret to inform you that in 2020 and the first half of 2021, no contribution can be made to Colourful Het Hogeland for the submitted plan... This decision had to be taken despite the fact that as a municipality we have a lot of appreciation for the activities of Colourful Het Hogeland and certainly understand the importance of this in society.”

While the decision of the municipality to stop funding the organisation’s activities is political and economic in nature, some local newspapers’ coverage focused on the initiatives of the organisation and how it contributed

31

https://www.sittard-geleen.nl/actueel/Home/Nieuwsoverzicht/Glanerbrook_sluit_voorlopig_als_locatie_voor_asiel_en_vluchtelingenopvang

32

Asylum-seekers who have been granted the refugee status and are allowed to work and live in the Netherlands.

33

[Politiek wil graag oplossing voor colourful Het Hogeland - RTV Noord](#) (accessed on 10 December 2022).

34

[Colourful Het Hogeland moet stoppen \(nieuws.nl\)](#) (accessed on 10 December 2022).

35

Ibid.

to the well-being and integration of newcomers. Another article³⁶ reported the side of the municipality and councilors about the alternative solution to support Colourful Het Hogeland. The report focused on interviews with councilors and parties who opposed the funding break. “CDA, ChristenUnie, SP, GroenLinks, and the PvdA ask the alderman (council chair) to still look at possibilities. The parties consider Colourful an addition to the municipality... The parties submitted a motion to award the subsidy anyway and calls on the board to enter talks with Colourful Hogeland to come to a structural solution for the future,” the article read.

The report³⁷ also gave different perspectives from the councilors, as shown in the quotes:

“The college (council) also greatly appreciates the work of Colourful...A solution has already been sought, but that no money is available. Also, because the municipality is in financial trouble. There is also less money available from the central government for the integration of refugees... If money will be made available, this will be at the expense of other associations or foundations. This will be discussed during the discussion of the spring memorandum in June. Then it must also become clear how the municipality is doing financially. Painful choices must be made.”

Mariette de Visser, council chair, Het Hogeland municipality

“Colourful does so much more than offer help to status holders. Colourful gives all people a face, a stage to show who they are as a person. In a hardened world, Colourful is a necessary party. For years they have invested, both financially and personally, to connect residents. Especially now that we read the negative reactions about the people who will be hosted in the Nassau barracks, Colourful is very much needed. I don't understand the choices of the municipality. We invest in bricks and buildings that will soon attract thousands of people, but as a municipality we forget to invest in people.”

Sandra Herkströter, municipal councillor of Het Hogeland and member of the Socialist Party (SP)

“Unfortunately, the municipality has to make choices about the financial resources that can be used. The contribution to Colourful is always paid from incidental funds that have been collected. At a certain point, these types of pots have dried up and other structural resources must be sought, which is not easy now given the uncertain financial situation of the municipality. In addition, it is not yet clear how high the government's compensation will be after the introduction of the new integration law in June 2021. If that clarity is there, new considerations may be made about the use of the resources. What is beyond doubt is that the work that the many volunteers of Colourful Het Hogeland do certainly make a positive contribution to the integration of status holders. Of course we regret that this choice has been made at the moment for financial reasons, but also the CDA group sees no possibilities to make money available for this now.”

Kor Berghuis, municipal councillor of Het Hogeland and member of the Christian Democrat Party (CDA)

Meanwhile, one local media article entitled “End looms for Colourful Het Hogeland”³⁸ featured the same story but used a happy photo of the foundation's Dutch and migrant volunteers after receiving the provincial volunteers award in 2017. The article nuanced that an initiative that received a lot of media attention for the unique, low-threshold integration activities and gives pride to the place should be supported and not be left behind. While local municipalities and politicians support and express a sense of pride for the welcoming initiatives, some are short in providing financial support, partly because many small municipalities do not have enough resources and little funding is coming from the national government. When faced with the task

36

[Politiek wil graag oplossing voor colourful Het Hogeland - RTV Noord](#) (accessed on 10 December 2022)

37

[Politiek wil graag oplossing voor colourful Het Hogeland - RTV Noord](#) (accessed on 10 December 2022)

38

[Einde dreigt voor Colourful Het Hogeland \(bedumer.nl\)](#) (accessed on 10 December 2022).

of who and what gets funding, the councils have the tendency to give least priority to local integration initiatives, as reflected in the reports. However, this specific funding cut happened in 2020. Since then, things have changed and the foundation is getting support again from a special fund from a national programme of Groningen province³⁹ and due to increasing migration, especially the arrival of displaced Ukrainians.

39

The National Programme Groningen was formulated in 2019 to deal with the negative consequences of gas extraction for years. The aim of this programme, in agreement with municipalities, is to make Groningen, while retaining its own identity, future-proof and liveable. For the implementation of the National Programme Groningen, the central government is making 1.15 billion euros available. Part of the agreements with the central government is that the municipalities are 'in charge' locally. Each municipality has the right to draw and can shape the goals of the National Programme Groningen. A condition for eligibility for this is to draw up a Local Programme Plan, in consultation with its own residents (from [Lokaal Programmaplan - Gemeente Het Hogeland](#)).

Einde dreigt voor Colourful Het Hogeland

Geplaatst op 06 mei 2020



De gemeente Het Hogeland heeft aangegeven te stoppen met de subsidie voor Colourful Het Hogeland. Hierdoor is de toekomst van Colourful het Hogeland erg onzeker.

Zo'n twee weken geleden hoorde Colourful het Hogeland het van de gemeente, via de mail. 'Dat was echt schrikken! Daar word je gewoon koud van. De manier waarop, maar zeker ook de boodschap', zegt Rinze Kramer van de organisatie. 'Ze zeggen dat het budget heel erg versoberd is, omdat ze te

On issues that involve politics, and in this case funding, the narrative is clearly controlled by local politicians and initiators of the welcoming spaces, and to some extent, residents who have a say on the issue. Migrants in this case are just onlookers.

Meanwhile, the local media also cover political parties' initiatives with organisations involved in welcoming spaces. One of these is the celebration of women's month hosted by the Christian Democrats (CDA).

The local media Nieuws uit Berkelland (News from Berkelland) provided a positive tone:

“After a minute’s silence for the victims and refugees in the Ukraine, they were able to enjoy a delicious breakfast buffet and the women talked to each other... A nice mix of 50 Berkelland women, consisting of newcomers, employees, and volunteers from the city council, from Stichting Culturije, Interbeek, the Food Bank, Meldpunt and Eetcafé Beltrum, Christmas packages Berkelland, the Giveaway Shop in Eibergen, culture connectors and local politicians... That there are many wonderful initiatives in Berkelland to allow all residents of Berkelland to participate, including newcomers, is evident from the background of the women present.”⁴⁰

40

[Nieuws uit Berkelland » Wederom een geslaagd vrouwenontbijt van het Berkellandse CDA - Eibergen, Neede, Borculo en Ruurlo!](#) (accessed on 20 December 2022).

The article also pointed out that based on the conversation with the attendees, many were not aware of the welcoming initiatives available for newcomers, especially women.

3. Socio-cultural framing

In socio-cultural framing, the emphasis is put on the social and cultural contribution of an event or initiative, while also focusing on individuals and communities (see Chong, 2009, on framing).

Welcoming initiatives in marginalised regions have been put in the spotlight by regional actors. The media also often hail volunteer organisations for their initiatives especially when a group gets recognised. It is also interesting to note that in the Netherlands, volunteer work is highly valued. Every year, to commemorate the King’s birthday (or previously the Queen’s), medals of recognition are given to individuals who have been doing volunteer work for many years. This is the highest recognition bestowed by the King to outstanding volunteers.

In the essence of volunteer service appreciation, several welcoming initiatives have already been recognised. In Zeeland, one was given the labour market innovation award of the Province of Zeeland. In Limburg, Leven Naast de Brouwerij (Life Next to a Brewery), a citizens’ initiative that organises social activities for young and old like language café, repair cafes and Alzheimer café, received an accolade from the Gulpen-Wittem municipality for its contribution to improve the quality of life and social cohesion in the community.⁴¹

In Gelderland, the Achterhoekse Cultuurverbinders (Culture Connectors) was awarded the Transformation Trophy 2019⁴² by the Sociaal Werk Nederlands, a trade association for work in the Netherlands.

41

[Uitstralingsprijs Gulpen-Wittem voor Leven naast de Brouweri... - De Limburger](#) (accessed on 18 December 2022)

“They build a bridge between status holders and Dutch culture. The Cultuurverbinders are former status holders who offer help to new status holders. This helps status holders to find their way in Dutch society and creates goodwill among neighbours and organisations... The jury was impressed by the soundness of the approach: ‘The Culture Connectors are trained and, for example, go along to appointments with the housing corporation or the municipality.’ It ensures a real

42

[Achterhoekse Cultuur Verbinders winnen prijs | Achterhoek | destentor.nl](#) (accessed 20 December 2022).

welcome in the Netherlands; it prevents newcomers from getting stranded in the bureaucracy and gives people who have been in the Netherlands for a long time a role. The approach is effective: status holders who participate find a job 25% faster," read a news item on De Stentor, a regional media.

The story about winning the award was carried by many regional, local media, and social websites in Gelderland.⁴³



Voorpagina 112 Stikstof Aardbevingen Ter Apel Gemist Sport Noo

'Het hoedje is het belangrijkste van de dag, daar heb ik me eerst op gericht'

18 september 2018, 08:25 • 2 minuten leestijd



Wahabou Alidou en Jenny van der Werf voor het Hoofdstation in Groningen
© Elwin Baas/RTV Noord

Het is de derde dinsdag in september, Prinsjesdag. Een van de tradities op deze dag is dat twee 'gewone' Groningers de feestelijkheden in de

In Groningen, Colourful Het Hogeland won the Provincial Volunteer Award in 2017. The local media also often featured the people behind the Colourful Het Hogeland⁴⁴ and occasionally included anecdotes from migrants it has been working with. In an article from the regional broadcaster RTV Noord, the organisation's founder, and a migrant from Benin were featured.⁴⁵ A photo of

43

[Cultuurverbinders winnen Transformatie Trofee 2019 | Sociaal Werk Nederland](#)
(accessed on 20 December 2022).

44

[Jenny van der Werf, belangrijke schakel in Colourful Bedum! – Bert Koster \(bert-koster.nl\)](#)
(accessed on 15 December 2022).

45

['Het hoedje is het belangrijkste van de dag, daar heb ik me eerst op gericht' - RTV Noord](#)
(accessed 20 December 2022)

them standing in front of the Knight's Hall in The Hague was used in the story. Jenny van der Werf, the founder of Colourful Het Hogeland, and Wahabou Alidou, a migrant from Benin, were invited to the Prinsjesdag, a yearly traditional ceremony where the Dutch King presides over the parliament and announces the budget and priorities for the year. They were invited because they won the Provincial Volunteer Award 2017.

"I thought: is this real or am I dreaming now? I'm really looking forward to today. It is unique to experience this as a citizen. I'm from Africa and I'll soon be in the same room as the king and queen!" Alidou was quoted as saying, describing him as wearing a modern African outfit, a chain necklace, and a hat. "I ordered clothes with orange in them in Africa. They came in yesterday, just in time... This is a typical Benin chain. We only put them on for special days, like today."

Social framing is regularly used on news features about the welcoming initiatives. They are often feel-good and positive stories about the programmes, the people behind them, and the effects of these initiatives not only on the target groups but also to the residents and communities. With social framing, most often the narratives are not contained to the initiators but to migrants and other residents who are part of the programmes.

One example is a story in the regional media Dagblad van Het Noorden about a recipe contest for all the residents of Het Hogeland organised by Colourful Het Hogeland.⁴⁶ The photo used in the story represented a mix of cultures, where the objective of the contest was to bring residents and businesses together through food from different countries.

The media also often feature welcoming initiatives' programmes, courses, vacancies for volunteers⁴⁷ and other announcements such as bee-friendly gardening and playing music,⁴⁸ tailor-made support for specific trainings,⁴⁹ fund-raising⁵⁰ and donations.⁵¹ The stories usually include the importance of the offered activities.

"...The courses and training are available and accessible to all residents of the municipality of Het Hogeland because learning opens doors to (volunteer) work, to social contacts and to hobbies and useful skills."

"The idea for the project arose when Ronald de Haan of Jongerenwerk Barkema and De Haan and George Bosch of Stichting KomOp! exchanged views on the negative noises in the region. 'Issues such as shrinkage, earthquakes and ageing seem to predominate. We want to make a counter-sound... We live in a fantastic area with many possibilities. We want to help keep the region promising and liveable'."

Reports on welcoming initiatives used narratives controlled by migrants such as the story about the Cultuurverbinders (Culture Connectors) published on the regional news site Aalten Vooruit.⁵² The story was devoted on two migrant women – Dilsoz, a Kurdish refugee from northern Iraq, and Ghaidaa, who fled the war in Syria. Both followed a specially developed training programme to work as cultural mediators. Using the voice of Dilsoz and Ghaidaa, the story reflected the importance of working together with migrants to reach out and help newcomers because it breaks down culture and communications barriers, as echoed in this interview with a migrant:

46

[Colourful het Hogeland organiseert een receptenwedstrijd voor alle inwoners, jong en oud, van Het Hogeland - Dagblad van het Noorden \(dvhn.nl\)](#) (accessed on 15 December 2022).

47

[VoorleesExpress zoekt vrijwilligers - Wuh Winterswijk](#) (accessed on 15 December 2022).

48

[Nieuwe cursussen bij Vakland: bijvriendelijk tuinieren en spelen met muziek - ommelander.info](#) (accessed on 15 December 2022).

49

[New project in Het Hogeland offers extra opportunities - Stichting KomOp!](#) (Accessed 15 December 2022).

50

[Studenten UCR zamelen 3000 euro in voor vluchtelingen noodopvang Studio A58 – Wij zijn De Stad Middelburg](#) (accessed on 15 December 2022).

51

[Protestantse regio kerken overhandigen cheque aan Colorful Het Hogeland. | Uithuizermeeden](#) (accessed on 16 December).

52

[Cultural connectors at work in Aalten | The latest news from Aalten \(aaltenvooruit.nl\)](#) (Accessed on 20 December 2022).

Berkelland

„Vanuit Berkelland doen Dilsoz Amin (Eibergen) en Sona Souqi (Neede) mee. Ze slaan een brug tussen statushouders en de Nederlandse cultuur. De Cultuurverbinders zijn oud-statushouders die hulp bieden aan nieuwe statushouders. Dat helpt statushouders beter hun draai te vinden in de Nederlandse maatschappij én creëert goodwill bij buurtgenoten en organisaties”, meldt Arjan van Faassen van de gemeente Berkelland op Facebook.

Echt welkom



▲ Achterhoekse Cultuurverbinders winnen prijs in Utrecht © Arjan van Faassen

De jury was onder de indruk van de degelijkheid van de aanpak: „De Cultuurverbinders worden opgeleid en gaan bijvoorbeeld mee naar afspraken bij de woningcorporatie of de gemeente. ‘Het zorgt voor een echt welkom in Nederland, het voorkomt dat nieuwkomers stranden in de bureaucratie en geeft ook mensen die al langer in Nederland zijn een rol. De aanpak is effectief:

“Huge differences in culture between the home country and the Netherlands often lead to problems. And then there are the traumatic experiences that the newcomers experienced during their flight. All these create barriers. We help to take that away. It helps that we speak the language of the newcomers, that we are ‘experience experts’, so we know what it is like to flee and then start again somewhere where you are a stranger. We also know the customs from the homeland of the newcomer. We use all this knowledge to build bridges and remove barriers.”

Dilsoz, a Kurdish refugee who now works as a cultural mediator at Cultuurverbinders

This type of reporting which uses the voice of the migrants put them in a positive light. It also makes the readers understand the situation and background of migrants who came to the Netherlands. In this story, the welcoming space narrative is produced by migrants themselves and not just the Dutch hosts. The story also veers away from the stereotypical ‘thankful migrant’ tone.

Fig.7

Welcoming faces: The forces behind the Cultuurverbinders.
Photo: destentor.nl

PREMIUM

Colourful het Hogeland organiseert een receptenwedstrijd voor alle inwoners, jong en oud, van Het Hogeland

9 juli 2021, 15:22 · Het Hogeland

Deel dit artikel



Other initiatives like Provinciaal Platform Diversiteit (PPD) and More Colour and Quality Foundation (SMKK) which aim to promote diversity and cultural exchange in the workplace were well covered by the regional media. An article on Limburg news covered a whole session of the diversity conference initiated by PPD and SMKK and quoted speakers and participants on the various nuances of attaining diversity in the workplace.

“This is a process that takes time. It’s a gradual process. That’s not something that has to happen from above, but it must be in the DNA of the person and the organization. So getting people from the bottom up to be able to understand the other, the empathy in the other. That’s very important,” José Ie of PPD was quoted as saying.⁵³

Also notable about the local media coverage of welcoming spaces is the attention to the element of innovation, where a good coverage on creative ideas and innovative solutions that address the associated effect of a shrinkage like closing of social centres or schools were devoted. A story about refurbishing an old church to convert into an innovative and energy neutral community centre in Gulpen, which will house social associations including one of the studied welcoming initiatives, claimed a spot in the regional news.⁵⁴

“Impressive are the energy-neutral measures...such as triple glazing, extra roof insulation, 140 solar panels, heat pumps, light sun reflexion, LED lighting and possible reuse of rain and toilet water,” wrote the Limburger.⁵⁵

53

[Meer diversiteit op de werkvloer: ‘Samenleving verandert’ - 1Limburg](#) (accessed on 20 December 2022).

54

[Innovatieve oplossingen nieuw gemeenschapshuis Gulpen - De Limburger](#) (accessed on 20 December 2022).

55

Ibid.



Dilsoz (links), Ella en Ghaidaa (rechts). Foto: Lydia ter Welle

Cultuurverbinders aan de slag in Aalten

19 juli 2019, 07:37 Voorlezen Algemeen

AALTEN - Per 1 juli heeft de gemeente Aalten cultuurverbinders aan het werk: nieuwkomers, statushouders dus, die zich inzetten om op allerlei manieren bruggen te slaan tussen overheden en instanties enerzijds en de nieuwkomers anderzijds. Bij Figulus Welzijn werken Dilsoz Amin en Ghaidaa Gherra. Samen met Ella Sankowska,



▲ Cultuurverbinders Dilsoz Amin (links) en Mebrahtom Sium Hagos. © Reinier van Vlietgen

Cultuurverbinder Dilsoz Amin: 'Wij slaan bruggen en nemen obstakels weg'

4. Economic framing

The economic framing shows the economic consequences or impact an event or initiative will have on individuals, communities, places, or regions (see d'Haenens, L., & De Lange, M., 2001; Konings, R., & Notten, N. 2021; Dekker, R., & Scholten, P., 2015). Welcoming initiatives that support job search, placements, and connecting migrants to crucial sectors like health, IT, and education have been widely covered by the local and regional media. Economic framing is a positive spin to rationalise the presence and need for migrants in these specific sectors, thereby providing solution to some challenges faced by villages and regions experiencing shrinkage.

Maintaining economic activity and employment in depopulating areas is one of the key national policies. Some training and transition trajectories for recognised refugees and other newcomers in designated economic sectors were developed as part of broader regional revitalisation efforts. For instance, the welcoming initiative Vakland Hogeland has received funding from the National Program Groningen, a partnership of the national government, province of Groningen and municipalities.⁵⁶ Another project, initiated by Tragel in Zeeland Flanders and the broader project, Care Home of the Future are supported by the Region Deal Zeeland Flanders through the 'Zeeuwen zelf aan zet' initiative. Similarly, the WOOW project is linked to Region Deal (RegioDeal) Park City Limburg (Miellel, et.al., Netherlands Country Report, Welcoming Spaces, 2022).

These intertwining efforts by the government, local and regional authorities, and local initiatives are well-covered by the regional and local media. In a report from Stadzaken,⁵⁷ an online media devoted to daily physical-environmental

Fig.8

(Left photo) Migrants Dilsoz, Ella and Ghaidaa are the faces of Culture Connectors who welcome newcomers. (Right photo) Dilsoz with fellow culture connector Mebrahtom Sium Hagos from Eritrea. Photos: Aalten Vooruit and De Stentor.

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For more information, see: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/gaswinning-in-groningen/toekomstfonds-groningen>

57

[Met Regio Deal wil Parkstad Limburg 'vieuze cirkel' van armoede breken - Stadzaken.nl](#) (accessed 20 December 2022)

living in Limburg region, it highlighted that the substantial amount of funding through the RegioDeal, where the government, the Province of Limburg and the Parkstad Limburg City Region are jointly investing 80 million euros to improve the living and economy in the region, will be a good start:

“Since the disappearance of the mining industry, the largest city in the region has been in dire economic straits. This is felt most strongly in the Heerlen-Noord area, one of the 16 areas where the government will actively focus on urban renewal. The quality of life and the socio-economic position of residents are substandard. The number of vulnerable residents in the neighbourhoods is high. Many people are lonely, have poor health, do not feel safe in the neighbourhood, and have a relatively low income. Furthermore, the areas score poorly on educational level and labour participation... Part of the approach via the RegioDeal is to better match supply and demand within the labour market through an integrated approach through education. Through measures that increase job opportunities for jobseekers throughout the region, but also by making targeted investments in those neighbourhoods and districts where the gaps in labour participation are greatest and most persistent,” Stadzaken reported.

In some localities, such as Berkelland and Hulst, municipal actors are intensifying municipal efforts to attract foreign workers or to keep newcomers in the region. Beyond these specific localities, expats and welcome centres play an important role in some areas that are experiencing shrinkage or peripheralisation. In Zeeland region, the Expat Center targets labour migrants, but not refugee newcomers. The International Welcome Centre North for Drenthe, Friesland, and Groningen, focuses on high-skilled migrants and EU (blue card) employees, but has recently also begun to support refugees from Ukraine (Mielle, et.al., Netherlands Country Report, Welcoming Spaces, 2022).

Economic and social framing is widely used in welcoming initiatives focused on innovative welfare and work in the care sector such as Nieuwkomers in de Zorg (Newcomers in Healthcare) in Berkelland, Achterhoek province. Most stories talked about the novelty of providing chances to newcomers through education and training that will help them land a job in the under-staffed health sector.⁵⁸ For example, a local media quoted Esther Hoekzema, director at care institution Vitaal Thuiszorg, and the initiator of the project, as saying:

*“The increasing staff shortages have been a direct reason to act... Sometimes we have to say no to hospitals and GPs (general practitioners). That feels very uneasy to do. Offering job opportunities to newcomers is a logical step for us. Moreover, we see a lot of potential in the large group of status holders. Our workforce is already becoming more diverse, but it is striking that we hardly employ recent newcomers, for example, of Syrian origin. We would like to involve this group in our care.”*⁵⁹

The storyline of helping migrants find avenues for work in the crucial sectors was the same in all local news outlets,⁶⁰ and too often they all seemed reprinted from the same press release. Interestingly, the one news that provided more context to this welcoming initiative is the job placement website finder.nl. It started its story with the line: “It is a well-known story: in healthcare it is difficult to get enough staff. At the same time, it is often difficult for new Dutch people to find a suitable job, even though they like to work. ‘Let’s connect these two challenges’, was the idea behind Newcomers to healthcare.” It also quoted migrant Samah Diab: “I learned a lot in a short time at school and from my supervisor at Vitaal Thuiszorg. For example, how to report on my work...It is becoming increasingly possible to speak Dutch with clients because we

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[Achterhoekse nieuwkomers aan het werk in de zorg | Het laatste nieuws uit Montferland \(montferlandjournaal.nl\)](#) (accessed 22 December 2022).

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[Achterhoekse zorgaanbieders bieden baankansen aan nieuwkomers via ‘Nieuwkomers in de zorg’ | Achterhoek | destentor.nl](#) (accessed 22 December 2022).

60

[‘Nieuwkomers in de Zorg’ helpt Achterhoekse statushouders aan een baan in de zorg | Het laatste nieuws uit Doetinchem \(doetinchemsvizier.nl\)](#) (accessed 22 December 2022)

receive Dutch language lessons at school. I also like to learn about Dutch society during the citizenship course.” The story cited the Newcomers in Healthcare as a win-win solution - providing appropriate training and eventually jobs to newcomers while at the same time filling the much needed positions in the care sector.⁶¹

Another welcoming initiative that has been covered largely by the media

Voormalig vluchteling Blerta Shaqiri uit Drachten helpt statushouders en zorgprofessionals aan een baan in de zorg in Friesland en Groningen

PREMIUM

Blerta Shaqiri (35), op haar dertiende gevlucht uit Kosovo, begeleidt statushouders en zorgprofessionals uit Kosovo naar een baan in de zorg. „Als we tekorten willen oplossen, zullen we onze vooroordelen moeten loslaten.”



Girl on a mission. Blerta Shaqiri has become the face of a former refugee out to save the shortage in healthcare through her agency Partisan Medical Mercenaries. Photo grab: Leeuwarder Courant

is Partisan Medical Mercenaries, an employment agency based in Smallingerland, Friesland province that recruits healthcare professionals with special attention to status holders and those from the Balkan countries. Its mission is not only to solve the care workers shortages, but also directly contribute to promote integration and diversity in the workplace. Most media articles relating to Partisan were about its founder Blerta Shaqiri, who flew Kosovo with her parents during the war at age 13. In an article about her in the business website zakenvrouwen.club, she was described as “a girl on a mission” to radically tackle the healthcare shortages in the Netherlands. In the regional media Leeuwarder Courant, she was quoted as saying, “If we want to solve shortages, we will have to let go of our prejudices.”⁶² Her family was brought to the Netherlands by chance and she grew up as a teenager in asylum seekers’ centre Drachten which she referred to as a difficult period. “Not an easy time... I ended up in an environment where I didn’t know anyone and didn’t know what was expected of me. In addition, my parents still cared for my sick brother and I did not want to be a burden to them. In short: I had to save myself and that shaped me. I remember thinking at the time: I must make a difference myself.”⁶³ Shaqiri’s narrative contributes to the more positive media coverage on initiatives started by migrants.

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[Baankansen creëren en personeelstekort verminderen door ‘Nieuwkomers in de zorg’ | Fijnder](#) (accessed on 22 December 2022).

62

[Former refugee Blerta Shaqiri from Drachten helps status holders and healthcare professionals find a job in healthcare in Friesland and Groningen - Leeuwarder Courant \(lc.nl\)](#) (accessed on 20 December 2022)

63

[Dans vanuit je hart en je voeten zullen volgen \(zakenvrouwen.club\)](#) (accessed on 20 December 2022).

Like Partisan, in the province of Zeeland bordering Belgium, is Tragel Care that specialises in caring for persons with disabilities. This initiative is well-covered by the local media especially in relation to recruiting employees from Spain. The media often featured stories of migrant employees who want to build a life in the Netherlands⁶⁴ and in the case of the Spanish healthcare workers, the easiness of having them around because of similarities in culture and their adaptability.⁶⁵ The media articles often echoed the Dutch care institutions' rational in recruiting foreign talents – shortage of staff in many regions.^{66/67}

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[Pau en Lorena uit Spanje werken in zorg in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen en willen hier hun toekomst opbouwen | Zeeuws-Vlaanderen | pzc.nl](#) (accessed on 23 December 2022).

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[Cliënten Tragel lopen weg met Spaanse Nadia - Omroep Zeeland](#) (accessed on 23 December 2022).

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[Spaanse medewerkers Tragel 'moeten echte Hulstenaren worden' | Zeeland | AD.nl](#) (accessed on 23 December 2022)/ [Tragel houdt nieuwe Spaanse werknemers uit voorzorg week langer binnen | Zeeland | bndestem.nl](#) (accessed on December 2022)



Nieuws Sport Weer TV Radio Contact

26 november 2019, 11:23 • 2 minuten leestijd



Cliënten Tragel lopen weg met Spaanse Nadia

© Omroep Zeeland



Cliënten Tragel blij met hulp uit Spanje

Nadia Lopez Gil is één van de Spaanse medewerkers die sinds de zomer aan de slag is bij Tragel. Nadia werkt samen met Jason van Boom op een zorggroep. Haar Nederlands is nog niet goed, maar ze kan

The Dutch context is characterised by several competing discourses on migration. The most common frames used in the media for migration and migrants are human-interest frame, threat frame, governance frame, and economic frame.

Migration is also often presented as a 'burden' rather than a benefit. In the last years, the 'crisis frame' has been used in the coverage of the asielcrisis (or asylum crisis), a situation attributed to the arrival of asylum seekers from non-European countries that has created a 'crisis' in (overflowing) reception centers, temporary accommodation and 'divisiveness' among politicians (local vs. national and between political parties). During the revision of this report, in July 8, 2023, the Dutch government collapsed due to conflict in coalition parties regarding families of asylum seekers. The ruling centre-left VVD of former prime minister Mark Rutte proposed to limit the entrance for the children of refugees who are already in the country and making families wait for at least two years before they can be united with their family members, an effort to curb the flow of refugees to the Netherlands. Suffice to say, the coverage of migration and migrants (especially pertaining to asylum seekers from outside Europe) is not always neutral. The ideological leanings of the media outfits (centrist, right-centrist, conservative-populist, liberal left, liberal) often carry with them their biases towards immigration issues in general. However, they are not known to be supporting any political parties. The narratives are still dominated by 'the ones who hold the microphone', namely politicians, dominant parties, organisations and experts. The voice of migrants are not entirely missing but needs to be amplified. Migrants claiming and challenging the narratives and stereotypes still needs to be desired in the Dutch media landscape.

In the context of shrinking spaces, the media coverage gives a platform to local politicians, businessmen, and residents to attack the seat of power in the Hague for neglecting areas experiencing the effects of depopulation. There is rage in these places against the term *krimpregios* (shrinking regions). For the local actors, rather than accepting the fate, a better strategy is *regiobranding* (regional branding) to signal a revitalization. Regional branding aside, the media also still describe shrinking areas in nostalgia (sense of community, melancholy, space, relaxing, freedom, once vibrant).

Lastly, welcoming spaces are framed positively, but still very limited while crisis frame remains common. Positive frames often gravitate around humanitarian sentiments and moral arguments.

The national media in the Netherlands are more focused on a bigger scale of news and projects/initiatives with national or international significance, thus, local welcoming initiatives especially in regions that experience shrinkage or structural population decline are not covered except when national attention is attached to it. Since the national media are based in big cities, they tend to look around their backyard. The task to cover the smaller (but not unimportant) welcoming initiatives is left to regional and local/community media. In general, the reports are positive towards the initiatives, volunteers, and newcomers

and migrants. In essence, local media's focus and market is the community that reads or browses the happenings around their neighbourhood and the issues that have direct effects on them. This is the main reason why these smaller welcoming initiatives are mainly found in local media.

The narratives produced in the media that reported on welcoming spaces/initiatives are neither very critical nor in-depth, but convivial, a reflection of community camaraderie witnessed in small villages, covering even the minutest meetings and announcements from the initiatives. The community media in the Netherlands still live up to the traditional definition that it originates, resonates, and circulates in the sphere of civil society (see Rennie, 2006) but when it comes to politicians or government officials, such as the story of funding break by Het Hogeland municipality to a successful social inclusion and intercultural exchange organisation Het Colourful Hogeland, the local media went beyond what was expected to hold the local government accountable. They cited the importance of political will and the need to support this kind of initiative for the well-being of the community and newcomers.

In terms of the framing of welcoming initiatives' goals, a few local actors state how projects may contribute to the revitalisation of shrinking communities. If local actors are involved in job placements and economic relations, the link between the initiatives and their contribution to the revitalisation of the shrinking communities is clearly seen. At times, local actors draw on positive frames and emphasise 'pride of place' and contribution to the community. Municipal actors, such as (deputy) mayors and councillors also contributed to such framing by voicing political support and 'championing' local welcoming initiatives (Mielle, et.al., Country Report, Welcoming Spaces, 2022). Most initiatives are initiated and coordinated by people of non-migrant origins, although there are several initiatives with high migrants' participation, either as employees, volunteers, or receivers. Who controls the narrative depends on the type of framing applied. There is also a high degree of coverage depicting the inclusivity of the initiatives.

Migrants/newcomers are not seemingly portrayed as forced to be thankful but more as part or important contributors of society. As argued by the International Migration Institute (IMI) migration is a normal aspect of social life, which can be found throughout history. Migration grows in periods of social change and migrants also have the force to change the society (see Castles, 2009).

The power over the discourse lies with the local community, the initiators of the projects and on migrants and newcomers who are connected to the initiatives. The welcoming spaces are defined based on the points of view of the locals and increasingly the migrants. If there was a hint that migrants felt forced in their actions to be thankful, it was nuanced and not obvious.

It seems that the welcoming initiatives in regions have found an ally in the local/community and regional media which help them promote their programmes and mirror their objectives. Among the reports analysed, not a single negative report about the initiatives has been found.

It is logical to think that local and regional media showing support on welcoming initiatives is also in their interest because these initiatives have an effect in the revitalisation of the region where readership, viewership, and advertisements depend on a steadily growing population and robust economic activity.

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GERMANY

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German Media Discourses and Narratives Towards Migrants

Introduction

Media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, informing the population about current events, and providing information. On one hand, trust in the media is an essential component of a functioning democracy, as it allows citizens to make informed decisions and engage in public debate based on reliable information (Center for Democracy and Governance, 1999), on the other, media has the potential and a role in shaping public opinion manipulation (Lewis, 2001).

A study conducted by Pew Research (2018) suggests that, overall, Germans

% who trust the news media ...



Fig.1

Trust in German media. Source: Pew Research Center, 2018.

tend to have trust in their media sources. Approximately 64% of adult Germans have varying degrees of trust in their media outlets. This indicates that a significant majority of the population relies on and believes in the information provided by the media. The breakdown of trust, as shown in Figure 1, provides a more detailed analysis of the different levels of trust among Germans and helps to understand the distribution of trust within the population and how strongly Germans rely on their media sources.

We characterize mass media in Germany as monolithic regarding the left-right political spectrum. Contrary to France, Italy or Spain, in Germany, most mass media outlets are placed in the centre-right range, except Bild, a typically right-wing tabloid and the biggest newspaper in the EU in circulation, and the populist-right wing Focus magazine. Tageszeitung (taz) is another exception as it defines itself as the New Left, in practical terms a centre-left newspaper. Figure 2 below presents the main German broadcaster and printed press. Radio and tv broadcasters are predominantly public, and the printed press is entirely private.



Fig.2

Logos of the main German media outlets. Source: The authors, 2022.

Below, figure 3 presents the level of trust and distrust, expressed by German adults, regarding the main media outlet.

% of adults in Germany who generally trust or distrust each news outlet

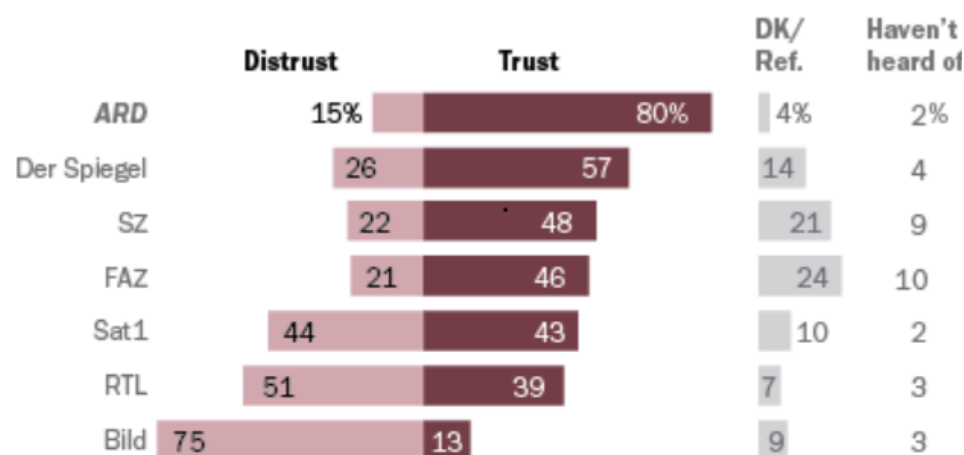


Fig.3

Trust and distrust in the main German media outlet. Source: Pew Institute, 2018.

People do not inform and are not shaped only by mass media, as its influence power is reducing with the ascension of the Internet platforms, such as social media (Arugette, 2017). Nonetheless, we hold the assumption that media and political contexts are still powerful sources in the creation of narratives and discourses on migrants. We are also aware that there is a plurality of actors that can play a significant role in shaping public opinion, such as social media and online platforms, social media influencers, political and religious leaders, peers and social networks, educational institutions, interest groups and activists, such as advocacy groups, think tanks, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) among others. These agents shape public opinion by raising awareness about specific causes, mobilizing supporters, and influencing public debate. Their campaigns, protests, and lobbying efforts can bring attention to specific issues and sway public opinion (Arugette,

2017).

The objective of this report is to select a variety of reports from the main German media and scrutinise the discourses and narratives about different issues related to refugees and asylum-seekers to be able to analyse how they are represented under certain frames.

Media uses frames to convey their message more effectively (Tanious, 2016). The selection of articles followed a pre-selection of frames that were possible to be identified in the text, such as human interest, responsibility, economic consequences, conflict, morality, victim, political, statistical, integration, problem/threat, and witness/source. These frames followed existing literature on the framing of European politics, such as those proposed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), Valkenburg et al. (1999), and Tanious (2016).

Methodologically, this is a descriptive piece, although we approach the different facets of this topic by employing a descriptive-analytical narrative, whereas we bring in reports and photos of the German mainstream media and some from social media to illustrate how migrants are depicted. These different report pieces led us to perceive a narrative that naturally imposes itself as the German media discourses and narratives about migrants. In a second moment, we bring in our analytical perspective based on some conceptual findings we could verify in the 45 media pieces we analyzed for this study. The selection of report pieces was made using the Google search engine. We used the following keywords: "Guest workers", "wave of refugees 2015", "refugee crisis", "Merkel and the refugees", "New Year's Eve 2015", "German media and refugees", and "German media and migrants". The snowball technique was also included in our search, as on certain report online pages, there was also a suggestion for other similar reports.

This report, besides this introduction section, is divided into the following ones: the second section deals with the political context and the first narratives about migrants. We start by presenting the political context which is in great measure the basis for the social construction of the anti-migrant sentiment in Germany. The political context constitutes in itself a key factor to understand German public opinion stance on refugees. In the third section, we bring in reports that deal with the refugee migration crisis of 2015. Welcome and hate sentiments were printed and broadcast throughout the German media during that period. In the fourth section, we address the emblematic, unfortunate "night that has changed everything", which covers the events of New Year's Eve in Cologne in 2015. In the following section, we chose to bring some analytical media pieces related to the refugee phenomenon and the place of refugees and migrants in the German economy. Finally, in the sixth section, we present our analytical perspective on the German media discourses and narratives on refugees and asylum-seekers. This is divided into five sub-sections: (i) Does German media reflect German society's views on refugees and migrants?; (ii) Media reflects polarization in Germany about refugees and migrants; (iii) Media welcomes refugees and migrants when the matter is the economy; (iv) A turning point in public opinion towards refugees: the role of the media; and (v) Concluding remarks.

In this section, we present the political context that made it possible to emerge an institutionalised source of hate discourses and narratives towards refugees and migrants through a political party, and we explain why this sentiment is concentrated in the East part of Germany. We also bring media narratives related to the guest workers.

Political Context of Narratives and Discourses about Migrants

With respect to discourses and narratives related to migrants, Germany has some specificities. The main source of anti-migration, hate discourses and narratives is not produced by the media, but by one specific political party, the AfD – Alternative for Germany. This means that Germany's major source of anti-migrant is within their institutionalised political system. This far-right wing party, through its website and social media, manages to reverberate the anti-migration discourse more effectively than the mainstream media's right-moderate approach. The party maintains its affiliate and sympathisers permanently mobilised: they march every Monday on the central square of many Eastern German cities. Figure 5 shows one of the marches we experienced in Saalfeld, state of Thuringia in September 2022.

The mainstream media occupies mainly a centre-right or right position in the political scope, and tend to be plural, but conservative in their approach, and convene mainstream socio-political discourses. Following is presented a summarised genealogy of the anti-migration narratives and discourses.



Fig.5

Far-right group, mostly AfD affiliated, marching in Saalfeld on a Monday afternoon. Translation poster: "We are the red line". Photo: Alberto Alonso Fradejas, 2022.

Anti-migration discourse and narratives gain a voice in the political sphere

The Social Democratic Party (SPD), having Gerhard Schröder as German Chancellor from 1998 to 2005 made severe labour reforms, causing labour precarity. As a result, these neoliberal labour policies moved SPD from a left to a centre-left or centre position in the political scope, which created dissidence among the SPD members that founded The Left Party. The former PDS (GDR state party) joined forces with Oscar Lafontaine's newly founded Labour and Social Justice – The Electoral Alternative (WASG, in German acronym) to form the Left Party. Lafontaine was an icon of the SPD, finance minister under Schröder's first cabinet, feeling not respected, he left the coalition after realising that he could not influence Schröder's neo-liberal agenda. In 2005, Angela Merkel became chancellor (2005-2021). She brought her party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), from the right to the centre-right position. The party, before Merkel and during her first years in power, had concerns about too much migration and too many different new cultures in Germany, holding a non-welcoming position towards migration. This is shown by a poster of a CDU candidate for the 1991 elections displaying his anti-migration agenda (figure 6): "Stop asylum abuse!".

Merkel, in her turn, sustained a position of pro-migration and pro-European Union. All media gave substantial coverage to Merkel's notorious assertive "Wir schaffen das" ("We can do it" or "We will manage it") when she took the decision to accept 2 million migrants in the 2015 migration crisis. Also, exposure was given by the media to the questioning from the far-right opposition about the "how" of this confident statement.

Mit Ulrich Nölle
auf neuen Kurs:

**Asyl-
mißbrauch
beenden!**

- **40.000 Asyl-Akten endlich bearbeiten**
- **Schein-Asylanten konsequent abschieben**
- **Grundgesetz ändern**

Am 29. September '91



Fig.6

Anti-migration agenda of CDU mayor candidate for Bremen in 1991. Source: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 1991; Wikimedia Commons, 2013. Translation: End asylum abuse! Finally, process 40,000 asylum files. Consistently deport false asylum seekers. Change the Basic Law (Constitution).

In the Greek crisis context (2009-2012), Merkel made a strong statement: "There is no Alternative for Germany outside the EU". The liberal dissidents that were not happy with the turn to the centre that Merkel had given to the party responded that there is an Alternative for Germany and founded a party named Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which was an economic-liberal, value-conservative party, in the beginning, to transform in the following years into a far right-wing gathering and the main anti-migration discourses and narratives producer in Germany.



Fig.7

AfD 2019 campaign banner. Translation: "Border protection & Migration. Only we decide whom we allow in". Source: AfD website, 2019.

The guest workers' narrative

In Germany, media coverage is a reflection of the socio-political debate on migration (Zambonini, 2009). Although Germany lately recognises itself as a country of migration, it was not the case at the beginning of major flows of workers in the 1950s and 1960s: they were treated as Gastarbeiter ("Guest workers"), remaining the German identity untouched, and no integration policies were in place. During this period, the media portrayed migrant workers as tolerated guests, welcome as long as they contributed to the economic development of the country (Zambonini, 2009). The German media just followed suit with the political and business discourse and normalised (without a critical stance) the socio-economic expectations vis-à-vis the guest workers. However, at the same time, the media kept recording protests as the one in 1962 by Spanish workers in Hannover demanding to be included in the social welfare system (Figure 8). Here the migrant workers are framed on one hand as victims of the social welfare system, and on the other hand, it is shown their agency demanding integration.



Behutsamer Protest in eigener Sache: Schweigemarsch spanischer "Gastarbeiter" im Mai 1962 in Hannover

Fig.8

Spanish guest-workers protest. Legend translation: "Cautious protest on their own behalf: Silent march of Spanish "guest workers" in Hannover in May 1962". Poster: "Social justice for all, also for us Spaniards". Source: DW, 2021.

Based on Germany's controlled migration policy in the 1950s and 1960s, especially from Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey to supply labour for the much-needed growing industrialisation, Germany was not depicted by its media as a migration country (Zambonini, 2009). These workers, later

concentrated on Turkish nationals, were not considered migrants, but just Gastarbeiter (Guest workers).

The total number of guest workers rose from around 330,000 in 1960 to 1.5 million in 1969 and 2.6 million in 1973. They are recruited and placed in their respective home countries by branch offices of the Federal Labour Office in consultation with interested German companies (Hinz-Wessels, 2018). The guest workers were directed mostly to hard, unhealthy work, such as in mining, steel mills, construction and other areas that were difficult to hire German citizens. They had no citizenship perspective in the short or long term, no family reunification rights, nor integration policies in place. The media did not portray them as a menace to German society, but rather as positive, necessary ("useful") workers for the country's economic development and for the maintenance of the welfare state. "Hopeful and optimistic", so were portrayed as the new Turkish guest workers' arrivals in the Ruhr Valley, as reported by Der Spiegel (figure 9).



Türkische Gastarbeiter 1964:
"Hoffnungsfroh und optimistisch" ...
 spiegel.de

Fig.9

The arrival of new Turkish guest workers in 1964. Source: Der Spiegel, 2017.

The Gastarbeiter programmes finished in 1973 with the petroleum and subsequent economic crisis. However, family reunification newly adopted policies, the late 1980s crisis in the Balkans, the fall of Communism, and the increasing number of asylum seekers made the inflow of migrants much higher in Germany and heated the debate.

One of the metaphors used was that “the boat is full”. Amidst the debate, the main weekly magazine, Der Spiegel came with a positive response to the debate stating that “the boat is not full”, as shown in figure 10.



Fig.10

The boat is not full. Source: Spiegel, 1990.

After the reunification of Germany anti-migration sentiment raised in the East

In the aftermath of German reunification in 1990, aggravated by the absence of integration policies, the social climate, especially in the Eastern part of Germany, became very tense, which culminated with a xenophobic arson attack on a Turkish home, killing five members of a family in Solingen, in 1993. With the introduction of the free market and single currency within the European Union (EU) in 1992 (with the Treaty of Maastricht) and the fall of Communism, the reunification of Germany and several of the former communist countries entering the EU, the German economy, especially its industry was again at the vanguard of innovation and growth, as Germany was the main country to

supply the demands for replacing the obsolete infrastructure and industrial equipment (machinery) of the Eastern-countries with financing provided by the EU. The need for workers was again on the agenda and this labour shortage, translated into the need for migrants, has received friendly coverage by the media. As of 2022, the immediate need for labour in Germany amounts to 1,7 million (DW, 2022).

Besides, the need for repopulation and workers in shrinking, remote areas was aggravated. Based on these needs and the humanitarian one, Chancellor Merkel made the decision to accept 2 million migrants. It is important to notice that the migrants from the first wave in 2014 were mostly Syrian, young and well-educated people.

The anti-migration sentiment in Germany, as depicted by the media, was rooted mostly in Eastern German states (as in Thuringia, Saxony and Anhalt-Saxony), the former Democratic German Republic (DDR). With the reunification of Germany, for some considered as “misguided” (Hölscher, 2007; Jüger, 2021), the states of the former DDR lost economic power and almost one-third of their population migrated to the West part of Germany. Their obsolete industries were taken over (usually by derisory sums) by Western German companies that immediately brought state-of-the-art technology and capable personnel to work in the best positions. The former DDR citizens, with an average age above 50 years old, were not fit for the new industries and felt trapped and robbed, and a significant number of the younger population wanted to experience the Western German lifestyle and moved to the Western part of Germany.

This internal migration flow was highly damaging to the economy and the demography: they were mostly young people, and female, employable age and well-trained (Meier and Foelske, 2020). More specifically, in areas where our field research is being conducted, within the frame of the Welcoming Spaces project, they lost economic dynamicity, are facing demographic changes, and hence social welfare stress. Thus, the need for migration to compensate for the demographic downturn is one of the alternatives being pursued. An important part of the remaining population has bitter sentiments towards the central government as they feel “left behind” and even consider that migrants receive better treatment than themselves or the local German population in need. This bitterness, associated with the nationalist sentiment, was incorporated and galvanised by the far-right wing party, Alternative for Germany (AfD). This party frames the local Germans as victims and the refugees/migrants as a threat.

To overcome the narratives that Germans are left behind and foster integration, the Thuringia state government launched 2018 the campaign “One Thuringia for All”. The central concept emphasised the acceptance of different ways of life, respecting religious, ethnic or cultural differences, focusing on what Thuringians have in common and valuing each other (Freistaat Thüringen, 2018).

Following, we bring in media report pieces that describe and present their views about the major refugee inflow in German history and what it entailed for German society, especially the reaction of right-wing radical groups.



Fig.11

Piece of “One Thuringia for All” campaign. Source: Freistaat Thüringen, 2018.
 Translation: “Our biggest difference: Hassan is good at remembering names”. Apprentice and manager at Mercure Hotel in Erfurt, capital of Thuringia.

The Refugee Migration Crisis of 2015: Welcome and Hate

Between 2003 and 2013, the number of asylum seekers in Germany averaged 34,000 per year. In 2014 it rose to 173,000, and since the spring of 2015, it has increased significantly once again. In mid-August 2015, the Federal Government, therefore, increased its forecast for the whole year to 800,000 refugees, mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. A large number came to Western Europe via the so-called Balkan route - via Greece, Northern Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary to Austria. This forecast was largely exceeded, reaching 1.1 million (Welt, 2016). This section brings in various reports about the biggest refugee influx in Germany and the reactions in society.

The Wave of Refugees of 2015: Refugees Welcomed

German media gave massive coverage to the refugee crisis in 2015. Interestingly, there were almost only positive reports in the early period of the crisis. The human interest frame was predominant. The Süddeutsche Zeitung published a piece with the title “Refugees in Munich: Teddy bears to welcome”.

"The refugees stumble out of the train doors, so full are the carriages. But they shout "Thank you Germany" - and are looked after by Munich residents. Mohammad waits. Again. The 17-year-old waited for hours at Munich's main station on Monday evening. At the platforms where the trains from Austria arrive. Mohammad fled Syria almost a year ago. His family made it, but many acquaintances still fear for their lives in the country of civil war or have long since lost them. "Last week, a friend arrived. Unfortunately, he was alone," Mohammad says in German. The friend's wife and children did not survive the journey across the Mediterranean. The Syrian tells this story casually while standing in front of platform 15 at a police barrier."
 Reported by Florian Fuchs and Melanie Staudinger in the Süddeutsche Zeitung on 1 Sept. 2015.

The overall tone of the report is positive, humanistic and condescending. The report includes an interview with a refugee and space is given for his own narrative and it is presented a general account of the situation.

Flüchtlinge in München

Teddybären zur Begrüßung

1. September 2015, 13:39 Uhr | Lesezeit: 4 min



Bilder

[Bilder](#) Münchner Hauptbahnhof

Wenn Hunderte Flüchtlinge gleichzeitig ankommen

In München tun alle Beteiligten ihr Möglichstes, um der großen Zahl der Flüchtlinge gerecht zu

Fig.12

Arrivals of refugees in Munich Central Station. "Teddy bears to welcome".

Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 1 Sept. 2015.

The reports are daily and updated during the day. The next day, the same newspaper came out with the title "When hundreds of refugees arrive at the same time". "In Munich, everyone involved is doing their utmost to cope with a large number of refugees. They are also relying on emergency solutions. Impressions from the main railway station." The report presents a collection of pictures of the situation on the ground, giving a positive reporting tone. Joy and hope are on the face of the new arrivals, despite their Homeric periple. It was not only the printed media which gave due attention to the flow of



Fig.13

Hopeful family from Afghanistan at Munich Central Station.



Fig.13

Multilingual welcome post in Munich Central Station. Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2015.

migrants but also the television. München TV, in its online edition, makes an account of the refugees coming through the Balkan route. Here is an insert of a report carried out in a neutral tone:

“Arrival in Munich - Hundreds of refugees on trains from Hungary. Most of them had spent the night at the station: 2,000 people travelled by waiting for connections, a police spokeswoman told the Austrian news agency APA. Because of the crowds, the forecourt at Munich’s main station is currently also heavily congested. Officials are trying to transport by bus the many people arriving. The fire brigade is helping to supply people with drinking water.”

München TV

The report also presents a fact checklist of issues German citizens had a doubt about, such as if refugees have smartphones, how much money refugees receive, why are coming mostly men, and so on.

The edition of Stern on 6 Sept. 2015 makes a very positive report on the solidarity of German people regarding the arrival of refugees: “Germany says:

Refugees welcome! Dark Germany my ass: since the first trains with refugees from Hungary arrived in Germany yesterday, a huge wave of solidarity has been sweeping the people. Whether in Munich, Dortmund, Hamburg or Frankfurt, the train stations are overflowing with donations in kind - and a lot of warmth. [...] There was applause for the arriving refugees in Munich - and for the smallest among them teddy bears and sweets.” (Stern, 2015). The



Fig.15

Munich TV shows migrants transiting by Hungary awaiting to be transferred to further destinations in Germany on 1 Sept. 2015

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), in its edition of 5 Sept 2022, printed a welcome post as its main photo. The same report announces that the refugees will be distributed to different regions of Germany, including Saalfeld, one of our welcoming Spaces cases, appear in the headlines.

Munich, Frankfurt and Saalfeld await refugee trains

The arrival of thousands of refugees is expected in Germany. Trains are leaving Austria for Munich, Frankfurt and Saalfeld. The railways are also preparing for the arriving refugees at their destinations. The states of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia want to take in about 500 refugees from Hungary. A special train from Austria is expected in Saalfeld on Saturday, said Saxony-Anhalt's Secretary of the Interior Ulf Gundlach (CDU) in Magdeburg on Saturday. The MDR had first reported that the trains would travel to Gera. The refugees would then be taken by bus to accommodations in the three counties.

Source: FAZ, 2015.

München, Frankfurt und Saalfeld erwarten Flüchtlingszüge

AKTUALISIERT AM 05.09.2015 - 13:55



Fig.16

A welcome post in Munich Central Station.

After the major inflow of refugees had gone, German media acknowledges the fading welcome to the refugees and find some time for life stories. This is the case of the website of ntv, a public television based in Cologne: “The cheers from Munich have faded. In Passau, however, only the federal police are waiting for many refugees, because they are only allowed to continue their journey after registration. For most of them, this is a mere formality after a journey full of hardship” (Winde, 2015).

The Syrian Behzad Ahmed, 26 years old, actually wants to go to Dortmund. His cousin lives in Dortmund. There he sees his future, at best in his profession as an engineer. The ticket in Vienna had been properly purchased, the ICE had already passed the German border when Behzad was roused from his sleep. Now he is standing between the freight tracks in Passau.



Fig.17

The apprehensive Behzad Ahmed and his family. Source: ntv, 2015.

Violent Reactions to Refugees

The inflow of refugees in Germany was already very high since 2014 when the country registered 238, 676 refugees, and in 20215 this figure went to 1,091,894 (Statista, 2022). Anti-migration sentiments and extremely violent acts against refugees were already in place throughout Germany.

“It’s shameful and repulsive”, says Merkel

After the fire attack on a refugee home, Angela Merkel visited the small Saxon town of Heidenau. After visiting the shelter, she pronounced harsh words for what has happened there in the past days: "It is shameful and repulsive". Focus Online on 27 August 2015, reported on Merkel's visit to this refugee shelter where extreme right-wing sympathizers had set fire. This media gave abundant voice to local people and their anti-migration hate. The locals see themselves as victims. Their claims were shouted to Merkel and local politicians and printed on a poster, which was highlighted by Focus Online. The headline, however, was divided between Merkel's strong assertive and the reaction of the locals: Citizens boo Merkel - Chancellor: "*Shameful what we have to experience here*".

Focus Online gives space for the protestors: "*Traitor of the people, traitor of the people*", chanted onlookers to Merkel and other politicians.

"*They'll never go back*", referring to the refugees. "*You have to do something about it!*", shouted locals with beers in their hands tell and booing Merkel.

"*Tillich [the Mayor] did not listen. It's about the quantity and the choice of people.*"

"*Merkel said she wants to talk to the refugees. She should also talk to us!*"

"*The politicians are pulling off their scam. They should talk to us, involve us.*"

"*What is being done for us?*" "We are the people." Locals complain loudly that too much money was being spent on the refugees.

A young mother says: "*I am already afraid that refugees will soon be accommodated in my neighbourhood. [...] I'm afraid for our future, that we will be overrun.*"

From the above assertions, locals are depicted as the victims instead the attacked refugees. Their narrative of forgotten and left behind ones, besides their expressions of xenophobia, find resonance in this report.

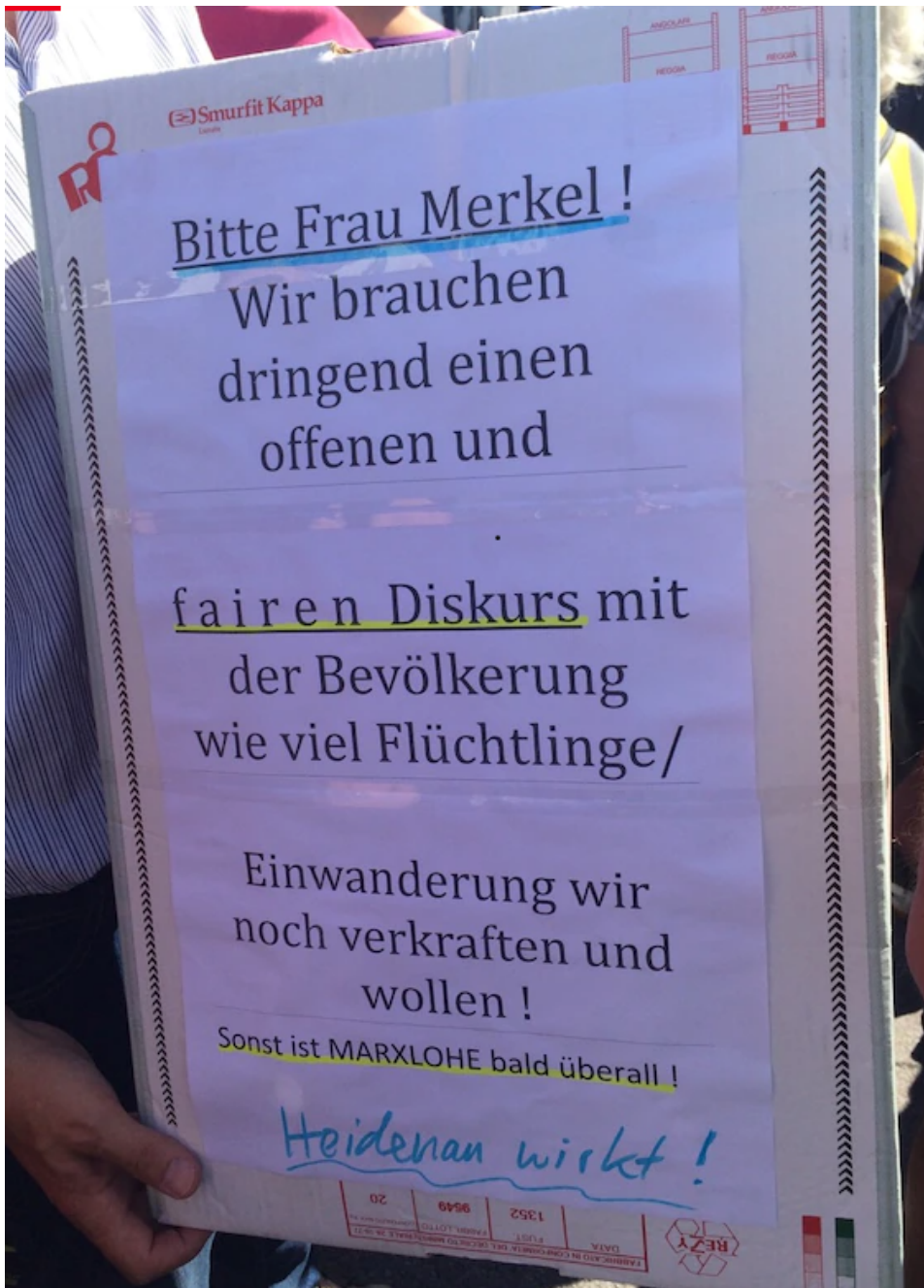


Fig.18

A poster held by locals on the occasion of Merkel's solidarity visit after a refugee home was set on fire. Photo: Julian Rohrer, Focus Online, 2015.

Translation of the poster: "Please Mrs Merkel! We urgently need an open and fairer discourse with the population on how many more refugees/immigrants we can and want to cope with! Otherwise, MARXLOHE* will soon be everywhere. Heidenau works!"

Attacks on Refugee: violence with the utmost cruelty, a sad long trajectory

The media has given due attention to the attacks on refugees, mainly their shelters, which have been widespread in Germany. The terrible xenophobic attacks in Mölln in 1992 and Solingen in 1993 are still in the memory of Germans and especially migrants. For them, the past is never past.

In the arson attacks in Mölln on the night of 23 November 1992, two houses burn down completely after the attacks. This was the first racially motivated attack in Germany after its reunification in which three people are killed.

Brandanschlag von Mölln: Neonazis ermorden 1992 drei Menschen

Stand: 24.11.2022 08:15 Uhr

Vor 30 Jahren kommt es im schleswig-holsteinischen Mölln zum ersten rassistischen Brandanschlag im wiedervereinigten Deutschland, bei dem Menschen getötet wurden. Die drei Opfer starben bei dem Brandanschlag am 23. November 1992.



Fig.19

NRD reminds the 30 years of the arson attack on a Turkish family house that resulted in 3 deaths in the flames. Source: NDR, 2022. Photo: Rolf Rick / DPA.

Translation: Mölln arson attack: neo-Nazi murdered three people in 1992. Status: 24.11.2022 08:15

“We, the survivors, are condemned to survive”

30 years ago, in Mölln, [federal state of] Schleswig-Holstein, the first racist attack in reunified Germany takes place in which people are killed: Three Turkish women die in the arson attack on 23 November 1992.

NDR depicted Ibrahim Arslan pointing to the plaque on the house to commemorate the three victims. Ibrahim was seven years old at the time of the attack. His grandmother Bahide wrapped him in wet clothes and saved his life. The firemen found him stiff from shock and cold in the kitchen. His grandmother herself perished in the flames (NDR, 2022). Today Arslan is also involved in anti-racist educational work. He asks himself 30 years after the attacks in Mölln:

“Why does someone affected by an attack have to build up a reasonable culture of remembrance, why do we have to lead an anti-fascist struggle? Because we feel compelled to contribute to ensuring that something like this cannot happen again and that the death of our loved ones must not simply remain without consequences. That is why we always go on, always have to go on. We, the survivors, are condemned to survive.” (NRD, 2022).



Fig.20

Ibrahim Arslan in front of the house that burnt with him inside 30 years ago. Photo: NDR / Katrin Bohlmann

The newspaper Die Zeit, after an investigation made by a team of journalists, portrays an in-depth story about the huge and increased number of refugee shelters that have suffered an arson attack. In a balanced tone, the report firmly denounces the violence against migrants shelters, put pressure that the cases are elucidated, and implicitly concludes that there is not enough will, nor the means to elucidate all the cases, as is shown in the citation below: “With the full force of the rule of law”, the state will take action against people who attack refugees. That was Angela Merkel’s promise in September. Now it turns out that the promise was empty. Almost every day, violent criminals attack refugee shelters. Sometimes paving stones fly, sometimes Molotov cocktails, and sometimes flats are set on fire or flooded. Alarmingly often, investigators and the judiciary are helpless and the perpetrators go unchallenged. A research team from ZEIT ONLINE and DIE ZEIT investigated 222 violent attacks on refugee shelters this year. The result: courts have only sentenced perpetrators in four cases, and charges have been brought in a further eight. That is just five per cent of all attacks. In less than a quarter of all cases, the police were even able to identify a suspect. So almost all of the offences have not been solved to date. Eleven per cent of the cases have even been dropped altogether. And this is despite the fact that 104 people have already been injured in attacks. (Blickle, P. et al., 2015)



Fig.21

An uninhabited refugee hostel in Weissach (state of Baden-Württemberg) burns down on 24 August 2015. Photo: Benjamin Beytekin/action press. Source: Die Zeit Online, 3 Dec. 2015.

The Federal Criminal Police Office even counted a total of 924 crimes against refugee shelters - more than four times as many as the 199 recorded crimes in 2014, so far this millennium the year with the most xenophobic attacks in Germany. Statistically, there is a total increase of 364 per cent in attacks - the federal government also attributes this number to the increasing use of xenophobic slogans and the massive agitation against refugees.

In Germany, people have apparently become accustomed to refugee shelters burning down, people being attacked and open right-wing agitation taking place in many places.

The civil society organization that advocates transparency in asylum regulations and applications, Pro Asyl, in partnership with Amadeo Antonio-Stiftung, has also positioned itself to denounce and increase pressure on the government to do more to contain violence against asylum seekers. Almost every third day this year in Germany. Often the buildings are already occupied.

A staggering attack figure: 3,500 in 2016.

The influential newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung makes a short, but alarming report about the number of attacks on refugees in Germany. Besides the staggering xenophile attack numbers, the novelty is that aid organisations and volunteers were also attacked. The publication also exposes the opinion of the federal government which condemns violence against refugees “in the strongest possible terms” and that they “can rightly expect to be housed safely”, failing to give assurance that the perpetrators will be persecuted.



Fig.22

A planned refugee shelter burns down in Unterweissach on 24 August 2015. Source: Pro Asyl News, 2016. Photo: picture alliance / Benjamin Beytekin Source: Pro Asyl, 2016.

Last year, there were more than 3500 attacks on refugees and refugee shelters in Germany. In the process, 560 people were injured, among them 43 children. According to the report, there were 2545 attacks on refugees outside their accommodation. In addition, there were 988 attacks on refugee shelters - slightly fewer than in the previous year (1031 attacks). Aid organisations or volunteer asylum helpers were attacked 217 times. These figures were supplied by an Officer of the Federal Ministry of the Interior to a parliamentary question.

Almost 1000 attacks on refugee homes in 2016

The newspaper Welt also takes stock of the number of attacks on refugee shelters in 2016. Although significantly fewer people seeking protection arrived in Germany in 2016, the number of attacks against asylum shelters remains at a very high level.

The attack in the federal states of Saxony-Anhalt was only one of almost 1,000 attacks on shelters for asylum seekers this year. The Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) has recorded 921 attacks on asylum shelters nationwide until 27 December, as the newspaper "Die Welt" learned upon request. Of these, 857, or about 93 per cent, had a right-wing extremist background. In 2015, the BKA recorded 1031 offences against asylum shelters, 923 of which had a right-wing extremist background. This means that the number of attacks remains at a constantly high level. The report poses the question if the terrorist attack in Berlin had fuelled a new wave of hatred (Kuhn, 2016).

Mehr als 3500 Angriffe auf Flüchtlinge

26. Februar 2017, 8:26 Uhr



Fig.23

A former hotel after a xenophile arson attack in Bautzen, Federal state of Saxony. Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2017.

Amidst the massive wave of attacks against refugees and their shelters, Chancellor Angela Merkel takes a clear position on the side of migrants. She visited several shelters, mostly in Berlin, with a clear strategy to avoid the extremely xenophobic areas. Here the refugees receive the chancellor with warm applause, call her “Mutti” and want to make selfies with her. The media gave full coverage and placed the narrative on a friendly stance for migrants. Merkel is depicted as a protector of the migrants and is recognised by them. An example of this is the report of Die Welt on 10 Sept 2015 in an asylum centre.

“Now Germany has conquered the world”.

The Chancellor immerses herself in the world of refugees in Berlin, meeting Syrian asylum seekers and children in “welcome classes”. Unlike in Heidenau, this time everything is going well for Angela Merkel. The refugees next to Angela Merkel (CDU) are mainly interested in getting into the picture with the chancellor and taking a selfie with their mobile phones. The refugee crisis is everywhere in the country, everywhere in Europe. This Thursday, Merkel tried to get her own impressions during a tour of Berlin. [...]

Karoum says: “Germany has never been as friendly to foreigners as it is now. Now Germany has conquered the world.”

Source: Bewarder & Maisch (Welt), 2015.

„Jetzt hat Deutschland die Welt erobert“

Veröffentlicht am 10.09.2015 | Lesedauer: 6 Minuten

Von Manuel Bewarder, Andreas Maisch



Sie wollte nur mal „Guten Tag“ sagen. Bei ihrem Besuch in einer Asylunterkunft in Berlin ist Angela Merkel spontan auf applaudierende Flüchtlinge zugegangen. Aus „Mutti“ wird die Flüchtlings-Kanzlerin.

Fig.24

Merkel visits a migrant shelter in Berlin. Photo: Die Welt
Translation: “Now Germany has conquered the world”. She just wanted to say hello. Angela Merkel spontaneously approached applauding refugees during her visit to an asylum centre in Berlin. “Mother” becomes the refugee chancellor.

The Selfie of the Year 2015

Besides being depicted by Die Welt and other media outlets, the economic newspaper Handelsblatt gives space to a selfie of Schakir Kedida, a refugee from Iraq, with Chancellor Merkel. The publication is titled the selfie of the Year 2015.

The refugee Schakir Kedida asked the Chancellor for a photo together in September. The selfie became famous. Now Kedida hopes his family will be allowed to join him. He calls Merkel a "patron saint".

Four months ago, a picture of his selfie pose with the chancellor went around the world. The magazine "Cicero" has now interviewed the Iraqi refugee Shakir Kedida for its current issue. The Yazidi farmer from Iraq still lives in the refugee shelter in Berlin-Spandau that Angela Merkel visited last September. His wife and five children are hoping for a family reunion.

Handelsblatt, 2016



Fig.25

Merkel in a selfie pose with Schakir Kedida, an Iraqi refugee during his shelter visit. Photo: dpa.

Angst among refugees

The German media has reported a series of stories about refugees having fear and even withdrawing asylum applications for not feeling safe in Germany. We start this session by bringing out the Berlin Christmas market attack, apparently committed by an ISIS sympathiser, which causes more concern amongst refugees for fear of right-wing reprisals.

The Berlin Christmas Market Attack

A terrorist attack that killed 12 and injured at least 45 at the Berlin Christmas market, in December 2015, has received the full attention of the media. Although the mainstream media has portrayed it as an attached perpetrated

by the Islamic State (ISIS), it is fuel for right-wing and anti-migrant extremists to connect this attack to refugees. Here is an excerpt from rrb, a public, Berlin-based TV, radio and online outlet: IS claims responsibility for the attack on the Berlin Christmas market

The terrorist militia Islamic State (IS) has claimed responsibility for the attack on the Christmas market in Berlin. The IS mouthpiece Amak reported on the internet on Tuesday that a “soldier of the Islamic State” was responsible for the attack. The authenticity of the message could not be verified at first. However, it was disseminated via the usual IS channels on the internet. The form of the statement also corresponds to earlier confessions by the extremists. Federal Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière said that investigators were following up on several leads after the “alleged confession”. (rbb24, 2016)

Hounding of refugees in Bautzen

The reporter Benedikt Peters of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 2 Nov 2016 comes out with the dazzling headline: “Eyewitnesses report hunt in Bautzen”, as the “hunting” here refers to refugees in the town of Bautzen, in the federal state of Saxony. Several people chased two asylum seekers near a supermarket in the city centre, threw stones at them and insulted them. The group consisted of ten to 15 people, the police said. One of the two asylum seekers was hit in the leg by a stone. However, no one was seriously injured (Peters, 2016). Clashes between right-wing extremists and refugees are frequent in this town. Mayor Alexander Ahrens admitted that he had “underestimated the situation a bit”. He commented on the recent incidents on Facebook: apparently, right-wing groups were of the opinion that they were acting for the majority of the population - “that is clearly not the case”. The mayor called for a stronger commitment from the “silent majority” (Peters, 2016).

Result of the hunt: police impose a curfew for refugees

The German public radio Deutschlandfunk joins to the “refugee hunt” coverage and published on its website on 10 Nov 2016 under the following headline: “After the hunt for refugees, Bautzen does not come to rest”. The report adds that the riots between xenophobes and refugees brought the East Saxon town of Bautzen into the headlines two months ago. As a consequence, the police increased their presence and imposed an evening curfew for underage unaccompanied refugees. But peace has not returned to the town (Brandau, 2016).

Because of several clashes between right-wing residents and refugees, these facts were the subject of repeated media coverage, including on YouTube.

Asylum seeker withdraws his application

In an AFP Deutschland report, one Syrian refugee from Syria stated Germany is experiencing the largest increase in refugee numbers in years - and at the same time the largest increase in xenophobic attacks in years. In Freital near Dresden, a young Syrian man decides to withdraw his asylum application for fear of violent Germans. He says that he had angst in Syria, however now in Freital, he was still more afraid (AFP Deutschland, 2015).

There is a considerable amount of material available in the German media,

especially on Youtube, about refugees reporting the fear and violence they suffered or their bus being attacked, as this one below:

Rabble-rousing mob blocks refugees' way into accommodation

A video is going viral and causing horror: A xenophobic mob bawls in front of the bus that is supposed to bring refugees to new accommodation in Saxony - not for the first time. DW Online makes a vivid report of the scene: A large coach is supposed to take refugees to a new accommodation in Clausnitz, Saxony. Inside, angry people sit, and women and children cry. "We are the people" chants a xenophobic mob of about 100 angry demonstrators in front of the bus. The blockade by opponents of asylum in front of the refugee accommodation in Saxony again causes horror. "We are the people" they chanted in unison. Children and women sitting on the bus are frightened and burst into tears. Only after hours could the refugees be brought to their facility (DW, 2016).

The next section deals with the events that have changed German public opinion regarding migrants, the New Year's Eve of 2015.

"The Night that has changed everything"

The events in Cologne, and in a few other cities, on New Year's Eve of 2015 produce a major change in the migrant narrative in Germany, especially concerning public opinion. Refugees get together in great numbers in the areas of Central Station and the cathedral for the celebration and, supposedly, there happened events of sexual harassment and rapes perpetrated by some refugees.



Fig.26

Fireworks in the Reveillon of 2015/2016 in Cologne. Photo: Maja Hitij

Fostered by the media's intense coverage, public opinion towards migrants changed from welcoming – excepting the extreme right-wing groups - to a sceptical one and even placing migrants as a source of the increasing violence in Germany. In fact, as shown above, extreme violence against migrants was present in refugees' daily lives and they were the subjects of the violence. Following, we present the narratives of a few news coverages on that unfortunate night in Cologne. Different frames are used, such as victim and human interest towards the young women who were attacked, and responsibility, conflict, morality, problem/treat and integration were used to depict the migrants involved in the events. We start the magazine Focus, a populist right-wing media.

“Sex attacks against women, strategically planned robberies, the police overwhelmed. Germany is shocked. What does the New Year's Eve chaos in Cologne mean for internal security?”

After the chaotic New Year's Eve in Cologne, Germany is in shock. Politicians and the public are discussing the scandalous events on the party mile between the cathedral and the main railway station. How could it happen that women were chased and robbed for hours by men who, according to the state of the investigation, were mostly from North Africa and the Middle East?”

In the cover story, FOCUS documents the crimes of an uninhibited mob. Assaulted women describe their worst minutes on New Year's Eve. The reporters also reveal the perfidious strategy the perpetrators used. In addition, the public was apparently only told half the truth for days after the incidents - probably for political reasons. Source: Focus, 8 January 2016.

Sex attacks against women, strategically planned robberies, the police overwhelmed. Germany is shocked. What does the New Year's Eve chaos in Cologne mean for internal security?”

Assaults on women in Cologne - fact check

The most prestigious German public tv news, the Tagesschau, in its online version, reports that only gradually is it becoming known what took place around Cologne's main railway station on New Year's Eve.

According to the police, up to 500 people are said to have been spotted on the station forecourt as early as around 9 pm. Later, up to 1,000 men were said to have gathered there, who “according to their appearance were from the Arab or North African region”. On Monday, there were 60 reports, a quarter of them for sexual assault. But the number of unreported cases could be even higher. Crimes such as theft and bodily harm are also alleged to have been committed. The investigators speak of sexual offences on a very massive scale and one rape.

Source: Tagesschau, 2016.



Fig.27

Cover of Focus Magazine ed. 8 January 2016. Translation: Women accuse. After the sexual assaults by migrants. Are we still tolerant or already blind?

Tagesschau reports that groups of several men are said to have surrounded, harassed and robbed women. The police emphasised that there was no question of 1000 perpetrators, as countless comments on the net claimed. "I cannot confirm a number of suspects in any way," stressed Cologne's police chief Wolfgang Albers.

A war of narratives

The cooperative newspaper Tageszeitung, or just Taz, has brought up the narrative of the 1,000 perpetrators that went over social media and cause much damage to the image of refugees:

The police press release on New Year's Day mentions "1,000 revellers" on the station forecourt. In media reports, this became a group of perpetrators consisting of 1,000 men of North African origin. It is clear, however, that not all 1,000 revellers were among the perpetrators, but only a small part. It is still unclear how many of them there were. According to eyewitnesses, there were 40 to 100 men (Taz, 2016).

1200 women became victims of New Year's Eve violence

Six months later, the Süddeutsche Zeitung presents some „final“ figures about the event:



Fig.28

Cologne's Central Station.
Photo: Tagesschau, 2016.

On New Year's Eve, more than 1200 women became victims of sexual offences in Cologne, Hamburg, Stuttgart and other German cities. This is according to information from NDR, WDR and Süddeutsche Zeitung from the draft of a final report by the Federal Criminal Police Office [BKA]. According to estimates from police circles, more than 2000 men were involved; nevertheless, only 120 suspects were identified, according to the report.

According to the BKA survey, there were 642 purely sexual offences in Germany and 47 suspects were identified. In the case of so-called combined offences - where sexual offences were accompanied by theft, for example - the Federal Criminal Police Office counted 239 offences, and 73 suspects were identified. Most of the suspects are said to come from North Africa.

In some of these offences, several women were involved. Thus, the BKA arrives at a total number of about 1200 victims of sexual assault: about 650 in Cologne, more than 400 in Hamburg and others in Stuttgart, Düsseldorf and other places.
Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 10 July 2016.

The victims' voice condemns the state of rulelessness

Anchored on the responsibility and political frame, ten months later the Welt gives voice to the victims' representative who condemns the attitude of the local police. According to a legal psychologist, representing the victims, the inaction of the police created a state of rulelessness, and the narrative of the victims tells of the failure of the state and its police (Die Welt, 2016).

AfD: New Year's Eve 2015 - from naive dream to nightmare

In the Bavaria section of AfD's website, the party takes advantage of the events in Cologne and Munich to restate that their anti-migration narrative was always correct:

The terrorist blockade of the Munich train station and the shocking crimes committed by predominantly Arab migrants in Cologne on New Year's Eve provides frightening proof of the AfD's warnings: uncontrolled immigration and the capitulation of the constitutional state are acute, existential dangers for Germany.

Munich. Where just a few months ago passers-by lined the train platforms with "Refugees welcome" posters to greet arriving refugees with media attention, on the night of 31 December 2015 to 1 January 2016 there was an icy void (AfD, 2016).

The events in Cologne, with the help of the one-sided media coverage, had such an impact on German society that the next debate was a question about the possibility of the end of German welcome culture.



Fig.29

New Year's Eve in front of Cologne's Cathedral. Photo: dpa

The End of the Welcome Culture?

Following the events of the Cologne New's Year Eve, the "end of the welcome culture?" became a heated debate on TV debate shows, newspapers and in academia (Wigger, Yendell and Herbert, 2021). Now, all previous extreme violence committed against the migrants faded as if they have never happened.

With the title, Five years of Cologne New Year's Eve: Expert criticises distorted reporting, Focus Online comes with a report that takes stock and gives voice to reasonable observations on the facts that had occurred five years before. However, in the first part, Focus gives voice to the prejudice:

The Cologne New Year's Eve five years ago marked the end of the welcome culture for many. Today, researchers view the subsequent discourse on security and foreignness critically. The police's changed strategy has been successful over the years.

Dark-haired men in front of the Christian cathedral

Many other women experienced similar things on the infamous Cologne New Year's Eve five years ago. They were sexually harassed or robbed, mostly by young men with a foreign background. The grainy blurry mobile phone pictures went around the world at the time: in the foreground, young dark-haired men shooting fireworks into the crowd, in the background the portals, windows and flying buttresses of the cathedral, which stand for the "Christian

Expert: Overemphasis on crime by migrants

New Year's Eve in Cologne marked a turning point in the refugee debate. Many spoke of the end of the welcome culture, followed by months of discourse on security and foreignness. According to the findings of social psychologist Andreas Zick, there was an overemphasis on crime by migrants, "which did not correspond with the crime statistics, especially with regard to the question: Which groups are susceptible to crime?"

Surveys had shown that as a result, polarization effects had occurred in the population. For example, agreement with the sentence "We should be more careful not to be overrun by migrants" had risen from 28 per cent in 2014 to 42 per cent in 2016, Zick said.

"The threat does not come from outside, but from within"

The Berlin migration researcher Wolfgang Kaschuba sees it similarly: the topic of sexual violence has received a "framing", an embedding, through New Year's Eve - it has now been linked primarily with foreigners. "It was suggested: If we keep the foreign young men away, then we will also keep this problem at bay. But we have known for a long time that more than three-quarters of sexual assaults are committed by friends and family. So the big threat is not from outside, but from within." Only the MeToo movement has set the record straight.

The AfD and others used the events to attack the refugee policy of Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU). According to the Cologne public prosecutor's office, however, the majority of the accused came from Algeria and Morocco - not from Syria, the country from which hundreds of thousands of war refugees had sought protection in Germany in the months before.

Amnesty International intervenes in 2016

"There are relatively many young men from North Africa in German cities who often came here unaccompanied as children, so they have a refugee biography that goes back years," Kaschuba explains. "They haven't found a connection anywhere and have therefore resorted to stealing handbags and mobile phones. And they end up on Cologne's Domplatte on New Year's Eve because they have no other place to go. That has more to do with their current social situation and less with their origin."

The Cologne police, who had only been represented with relatively few forces at the station on the night in question, massively increased their presence as a lesson learned. But the learning process did not end there: On the following New Year's Eve 2016/17, there were hardly any sexual offences and thefts, but nevertheless accusations again. Hundreds of people had been surrounded and controlled solely because of their actual or suspected North African origin, Amnesty International criticised (Focus Online, 2020).

Following, based on responsibility, political, morality and economic consequences frames, we bring in some discussions from the German economic media about the causes of migration- and the role of refugees and migrants in the German economy.

An Analysis of the refugee causes and the place of economy

This section is divided into three parts: first, based on the moral and responsibility frames, we bring an extensive report by *WirtschaftsWoche* about the selling of weapons to the Middle East as a major cause of the refugee phenomenon. The second, by *Spiegel Wirtschaft*, on the economic and political frames, refugees are depicted as economic instruments for the German economy. Finally, in the third part, by *RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland (rnd)*, we revisit the key decision statement by Merkel to accept refugees in great numbers, “we will manage it” to inquire what was made in relation to employment inclusion.

“Weapons for the Middle East, Refugees for Germany”

German media also gives space to discuss the causes of the waves of refugees as described in this report by the economic weekly magazine *WirtschaftsWoche*. This is a sister publication of the daily economic newspaper *Handelsblatt*. The report is based on a critical tone that questions certain EU countries, and emphasis is given to France due to her important amount of arms sales to the Middle East and Africa. However, in this coverage, refugees are depicted as a burden for German society. This is put forward by the headline “Weapons for the Middle East” (representing the economic and geopolitical interests), and “refugees for Germany” (the burden as a result of this policy which is taken in charge by Germany). The authors state that French president “Hollande does not want to dispute Chancellor Angela Merkel’s role as protector of refugees. Paris is counting on a European division of tasks. France wants to act militarily and politically, while Germany is to take on the main task of taking in refugees. And this is what the division of tasks looks like in concrete terms: Within two years, France is to take in up to 24,000 refugees. For comparison: that’s how many refugees arrive in Munich within two days” (Doll and Cesar, 2015). Below, follows the narrative of *WirtschaftsWoche*.

“Weapons for the Middle East, refugees for Germany

The refugee crisis is the receipt of Europe’s indifference. Germany is paying the price for its naivety and silence. The humanitarian catastrophe in Syria

has been dragging on for years. But no one in European politics has really been interested. Europeans have preferred to leave the Syrian trouble spot to others and their power-political interests. When the flow of refugees at the external borders of the European Union (EU) could no longer be stopped, European solidarity quickly came to an end. Only Sweden, Austria and Germany feel responsible for the refugees. The rest of the EU continues to play "Europe à la carte". You only choose what suits you. The refugees are not one of them. This will have a long-lasting effect. [...] 202,700 asylum seekers were registered in Germany in 2014 (32 per cent of all applicants), 81,200 in Sweden (13 per cent) 64,600 in Italy (10 per cent), 62,800 in France (10 per cent) and 42,800 in Hungary (7 per cent). (Doll and Cesar, 2015).

The article goes on to state that Berlin and Brussels still believe that the problem is temporary, but "the refugee problem" is likely to get worse in the next few years. Today it's the refugees from Syria, tomorrow those from Libya and the day after tomorrow those from sub-Saharan Africa. In 20 years, there will probably be 900 million more people living south of the Sahara, looking for work and a future. If no viable solution is found for the African continent, there is no end in sight to the flow of refugees to Europe.

WirtschaftsWoche

FLÜCHTLINGSKRISE

Waffen für Nahost, Flüchtlinge für Deutschland

von Frank Doll und Gerald Cesar
12. September 2015

Die Flüchtlingskrise ist die Quittung für Europas Gleichgültigkeit. Deutschland zahlt den Preis für seine Naivität und Leisetreteri.

As important and right as German aid for the refugees is now, it will reach its limits at some point. A permanent influx of hundreds of thousands of mostly young men, from different cultures, with different mentalities and different religions, is a problem in itself. The long-term risks of failed integration are particularly high here. No one can want Thilo Sarrazin ("Germany is abolishing itself") to be right in the end, finalize the authors.

This is an allusion to the book by Thilo Sazzazin, a former SPD politician,

Fig.30

Headlines of the Economic Weekly magazine WirtschaftsWoche in a critical approach to the causes of the current refugee crisis. Translation in the right column.

which contains racist and ethnic assumptions and assumes that Germany is threatened by migration and this could entail German people's disappearance.

Refugees as an Economic Factor

The Spiegel Economy at the outbreak of the refugee crisis, come up with a utilitarian, analytical report from the perspective of the economy. Refugees and migrants are depicted as "enormous economic challenges" but also as "great opportunities" for Germany" (Spiegel Wirtschaft, 2015).

Hundreds of thousands of refugees want to live, work and consume in Germany. The arrival of so many poses enormous economic challenges for Germany - but also great opportunities, as put by Spiegel Wirtschaft:

Labour market: opportunity or burden?

At first glance, the conditions are currently ideal for integrating refugees into the German labour market. Just 2.65 million people were without a job in October - the lowest level in 24 years.

However, this is no guarantee that refugees will be able to quickly gain a professional foothold in Germany, warned economist Clemens Fuest in the Handelsblatt. He points out that the majority of refugees arrive in Germany without having completed vocational training. Although about half of the migrants are younger than 25 and can be trained here, they can contribute little to financing the national budget for the time being. Fuest's conclusion: taking in refugees is morally right, but there will hardly be any economic advantages.

Other experts clearly disagree here. The head of the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Joachim Möller, told SPIEGEL ONLINE that the potential of refugees for society and the labour market is greater than what the level of education of these people indicates. The great opportunity lies in the fact that the majority of refugees are so young. "That means we can still make a real difference," Möller said.

And what about the fear that refugees will take jobs away from Germans? Even sceptic Fuest writes that this worry is unfounded. "It is true that low-skilled domestic workers may have to accept lower wages or poorer job opportunities. But these effects tend to be small and temporary," says Fuest. The researchers agree on one point: in view of demographic development, Germany urgently needs immigrants - and they must be as well educated as possible. (Source: Spiegel Wirtschaft, 2015)

The same report appoints that scientists advocate directing refugees to regions where there is a shortage of labour and housing is available. However, experts also warn against applying this method across the board. Politicians

have already called for refugees to be given preference in eastern Germany because many flats are empty there. According to a report by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW), unemployment is significantly higher there than on average and people have poorer employment opportunities. “Increased accommodation for refugees would exacerbate the economic problems there in the short term,” the experts warn with regard to eastern Germany (Spiegel Wirtschaft, 2015).

The federal government sees Germany as “better sorted today than in 2015” in terms of migration policy, as Labour Minister Hubertus Heil says. After sometimes bitter disputes between the CDU and CSU and between the CDU/CSU and SPD, laws for easier deportations, better integration and for skilled labour immigration have been introduced (Source: rnd, 2020).



Fig.31

Headlines of the Economic Weekly magazine *WirtschaftsWoche* in a critical approach to the causes of the current refugee crisis. Translation in the right column.

Analytical perspective

Migration, usually rather a marginal topic in German media coverage and political debate, has developed into one of the main news topics in the course of 2015. The first finding of this research is that German media frames discourses and debates on refugees and migrants basically around politics, and politicians receive unbalanced space in the coverage. Nearly all coverage comes under the section of ‘Politics’. The second finding is that until the events

in Cologne, the media does not portray migrants with depreciative terminology, rather, uses neutral terms. An exception is made to the newspaper Bild and the magazine Focus, which had been covering with some prejudice and easily associating refugees with crimes. Further, Focus has made a manipulative, highly prejudiced coverage of Cologne 2015 New Year's events, and has given voice to anti-migrant, right-wing individuals, groups and sometimes to the AfD party to qualify migrants with very depreciatory terms and, above all, to question German attitude to receive migrants in great numbers.

We have structured this analytical section around three perspectives: first, we interrogate if German media in some measure reflect German society's stances on refugees and migration. Second, as a corollary of the first, we assert that media reflects the polarization in the German political and social spectrum on the subject. In the third section: German media accepts very well the economic argument for justifying the reception of refugees and migrants, and finally, we discuss the role of the media in the turning point in public opinion towards refugees.

Does the German media approximately reflects German society's views regarding refugees and migrants?

German media, in general, follows the socio-political climate. It is noticeable that they also give voice to the far-right wing party and sympathisers. The main events reported above related to refugees have received vast coverage: the massive arrival of refugees in 2015, the violent acts against them and the events in the New Year's Even in Cologne, known as "the night that changed everything". In fact, fuelled by media coverage, mostly based on no further investigations, produced a major change in German public opinion about the acceptance and welcoming of refugees.

Since that night, refugees and migrants have moved into the focus as perpetrators of violence and have become the focus of reporting. On the other hand, the growing violence against refugees has faded in the reports. According to a report from the Welt (2017), the newspaper "Bild" has reported on refugees and migrants mostly in connection with crime. In 64.3 per cent of the articles examined, foreigners were mentioned when they were suspected of a crime. In comparison, according to the same report, "Süddeutsche Zeitung" 39.5 per cent and "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" 38.2 per cent, therefore are less likely to mention crime. In the "taz", 18.6 per cent of the articles about non-Germans were significantly less about crimes. Further, the perspective of those affected is mostly left out when the media talk about refugees. In the "Bild" newspaper, a non-German interlocutor had a say in 3.6

per cent of the articles examined; in the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” in 20 per cent (Welt, 2017).

Chancellor Merkel’s notorious statement, “We can do it” was emblematic of the peak of the refugees’ influx in the summer of 2015 and signaled to the whole EU, Germany’s willingness to receive 2 million refugees. It was a decision that polarized the political and social stances. However, this was not a totally humanitarian-based move. There were economic motivations too in order to maintain the continuous economic growth of Germany. What followed that statement in connection with the so-called refugee crisis in the months that followed, signaled the “welcome culture” practices in many places and, for some, the “loss of control” as a result of mass immigration without immediate official registration.

The major refugee influx in 2015 was seen by some media (for example, DW, 2019), as a fact that has changed the country. A few months after the arrival of the first large groups of refugees, the media reflected that the welcoming mood in parts of the population is slowly changing. This happened especially after the Cologne New Year’s Eve events, due in part because of media manipulation. There are and were of course also positive reports about refugees after the much talked about New Year’s Eve in 2015, but the fact is that the media reported differently after that night.

Media reflects polarization in Germany

Positions in Germany were polarised at the time, people felt they were not sufficiently informed and were unsure about the challenges. Angela Merkel’s sentence “We can do it” without explaining how and with what means or aid structures did not help to build trust. One of Merkel’s policy flaws is her failure to communicate with Germany’s citizens. One factor that certainly led to the long political resignation and finally to the rage against Merkel and the strengthening of the AfD was the lack of real political opposition. Merkel literally sucked up every issue that interested the majority of people at the time, even if it was completely against the CDU line. Examples of this are the end of compulsory military service, gay marriage, disarmament, abolition of secondary schools and reform of the school system, end of nuclear power after Fukushima, etc.

The strong polarization in Germany between supporters and opponents of the refugee course (and of course the refugees themselves) shows the dilemma the media face. If they report too much in one direction, criticism comes from one side. If it goes in the other direction, criticism comes from the other side. If they report too much about crimes, the public mood could tip, if they report

too little about “good migrants”, they also report too much and are called the “lying press”. People who report positively about refugees, get involved and support the course are called “left ticks” by the extreme right. People who voice criticism and have concerns are quickly labelled by the extreme left as “Nazis” and AfD supporters. This can be observed especially on social media such as Twitter, YouTube, and the like.

It also seems as if a certain line was set, especially in the early days, along the lines of “If I don’t mention the possible problems, the others will certainly forget about them”. The fact that this led to a loss of trust and rather had the opposite effect since AfD and other right-wing networks and organisations were able to almost completely occupy and interpret this field at the time, is not reflected in the respective media. (Best example New Year’s Eve 2015 - AfD published several statements on the night before the large-scale public reporting).

It was the most burning issue for a long period of time in Germany. As a result, political parties tried to define themselves in the public discourse. One can speak of a vacuum in the right-wing political sphere, because the CDU, which in Merkel’s early years / the years before certainly represented AfD positions (German Leitkultur, rape during pregnancy is not a criminal offence, against gay marriage) no longer occupied these topics with the consolidated party leader Merkel. Many citizens who voted for the CDU at that time and were “in the middle of society” (CDU’s own description) were suddenly outsiders to the party system represented in parliament with their fears / racist position on migration in view of the crisis. This is how the AfD managed to get into every state parliament with the targeted spreading of agitation and picking up on the political concerns of the citizens, and finally to enter the Bundestag in 2017 with 12.7%, although it had not been represented before - this had never happened before in Germany.

Certainly, this development and the loss of trust of certain groups of people in media coverage contributed to future reports focusing on crimes committed by migrants, hunts against refugees or the burning of refugee homes.

There have also been several reflection reports, for example by public broadcasters, on their reporting over the years, which are quite factual and accurate.

On the local level, however, there is hardly any coverage of migration or refugees (at least not in local newspapers). Instead, newsletters and news networks are formed in social media channels (which means that only a certain clientele knows about this news).

Media welcomes refugees and migrants when the subject is the economy

In Germany, refugees and migrations matter from an economic viewpoint. Besides the humanitarian component, there is a close relation to the economy. Differently from the far-right-wing individuals and groups, the media sees migrants as a positive factor in the German economy.

First, migrants are regarded as supporting industrial development (which could not have reached its dimension without the Gastarbeiter), and second, to maintain German industry competitive in the world market.

The present refugees are likely to have a positive effect on the German economy. It is to be expected that five to ten years after their arrival, the refugees will also make a greater net contribution to economic output in Germany than they receive in benefits. The potential of refugees for society and the labour market is greater than what the level of education of these people indicates. The great opportunity lies in the fact that the majority of refugees are so young (Spiegel Wirtschaft, 2015).

The chief economist of Deutsche Bank, David Folkerts-Landau, also advocates actively integrating refugees and migrants into the labour market in order to guarantee future growth. "If nothing changes, we will face a future with fewer workers and lower growth rates," he warned. Without immigrants, the number of employed people in Germany would fall by 4.5 million within the next ten years, the economist calculated. "Economic growth would drop from the current average of 1.5 to around 0.5 per cent" (Spiegel Wirtschaft, 2015).

In sum, when connecting refugees and migrants to economic development, the economic media has a favourable narrative for refugees and migrants.

A turning point in public opinion towards refugees: the role of the media

The coverage of the refugee crisis

Tagesschau (2017) reports on a study that criticised the lack of neutrality of the German media in the coverage of the refugee crisis. The study intended to answer the following question: Did the German media report on the refugee crisis in 2015 in a one-sided way and thus contribute to the division of society? Was the leading media allied with the political and economic elites?

The study was commissioned by the Otto Brenner Foundation and conducted jointly by the Hamburg Media School and the University of Leipzig, headed

by Michael Haller, Scientific Director of the European Institute of Journalism and Communication Research, who, along with his team, analysed more than 30,000 reports of regional and national German newspapers. The report of the study comes to the conclusion of a yes for both questions, but it does not mention a general media failure. Tagesschau and Spiegel Online, for example, are accused of hardly being able to sort out and carefully prepare the news and reports for the readers, especially in the first half of 2015. The result was that the audience was overloaded, besides a concomitant strengthening of existing prejudices about refugees. The topic of the “refugee crisis” had been described mainly from the perspective of politicians and in an uncritical way. Other people involved in dealing with the immediate effects of the crisis in everyday life seemed so unimportant, as well as the opposition parties were underrepresented in the debates.

According to the study, in about half of the reporting, the journalistic quality principle of neutrality and objectivity had not been observed but had been formulated in a judgmental and evaluative manner. Opinion pieces such as commentaries were in the majority, and interviews, on the other hand, were hardly to be found. In addition, a “personal closeness, even familiarity with the political elite” could often be read from the texts, appoints the study.

The concerns and fears of the population had been neglected in the reporting. “Hardly any commentary”, the authors wrote, “attempted to differentiate between right-wing radicals, the politically insecure and concerned citizens who felt marginalised. Thus, the comments served, grosso modo, not the goal of discussing different basic attitudes, but that of giving emphasis to one’s own conviction or governmental political view”, ponders the report.

A kind of “morally intoned norm of obligation” had developed around the term “welcome culture” in the reporting, i.e. a positive model. According to the study, until Christmas time, the precarious behaviour of many young asylum seekers was virtually overlooked, in favour of the welcome culture. “Then came the shock of New Year’s Eve and everyone said in retrospect, we were obviously dreaming, but now let’s get down to reality! The reality now consists of sex-obsessed Arabs. So from one one-sidedness to the other” (Tagesschau, 2017).

The events in Cologne greatly frightened German society. While a clear majority of the population was still in favour of accepting refugees in the summer of 2015, this picture was reversed in surveys from January 2016 onwards.

The events of 2015 New Year’s Eve in Cologne were also a turning point for the German media, especially the private one. The edition of the magazine Focus of 8 January 2016, represents a strategic manipulation push to the emotional engagement of the readers based on deep colonial prejudice vis-à-vis Muslim, black men in contrast to European, pure, defenceless women and girls. The imaginary of Europe as a woman is brought up again. So, as European women are attacked, Europe is under attack. A strong manipulative aspect of Focus cover is the fact that the magazine did not publish a real picture of the events but a studio-produced scene to convey all prejudice, manipulative aspects and the blindness to see the real character of the asylum-seekers, and calling to an end the tolerance regarding them.

Five years after the events, the same Focus magazine comes questioning if

this was the end of the welcoming culture in Germany regarding the asylum-seekers. The same imaginary of Muslims attacking the Christian culture is back: “Dark-haired men in front of Christian cathedral [...] which stands for the ‘Christian Occident’” (Focus Online, 2020). The imaginary of the lustful Oriental is part of the conflict between the Christian Occident and the Muslim Orient that has lasted for over a thousand years, but it has also been directed against Jews.

After the events in Cologne, the reference to this ancient image of the enemy now served on the other side of the political spectrum to reject a discussion about the connection between origin and sexual crimes as “racially” motivated. The media reflected this polarisation. On the one hand, more and more reports appeared about sexual harassment and rape committed by Muslim refugees. On the other hand, commentators wrote against the thesis that the culture or religion of the perpetrators had something to do with the assaults.

Refugees do not commit more crimes than Germans. However, their crimes receive much more attention from the media, and their crimes have a much higher impact on public opinion, especially when the media employs manipulation techniques. Imageries used are not incidents, but part of a larger historical pattern in which the masculinity of racialized, Muslim or black men, the others, has been perceived as a threat to “European civilization” and European women (Hart, 2017).

The Cologne incidents were quickly picked up not only by German but also by international media and passionately debated in the context of refugee policies. The incident sparked far-reaching public discussions about limiting the number of refugees, tightening border controls, Merkel’s refugee policies in general, and refugees being nearly impossible to integrate (Tanious, 2016), due to cultural differences. Moreover, Merkel’s famous statement, “Wir schaffen das” faced doubts and questioning among public opinion and within her own CDU party.

Concluding Remarks

We sum up this report with these remarks:

Migration became a significant news topic in Germany in 2015, shifting from a marginal topic to a major focus in media coverage and political debate. German media frames discussions on refugees and migrants primarily around politics, with politicians receiving unbalanced coverage and attention. Most coverage falls under the section of ‘Politics’.

Before the events in Cologne in 2015, the media generally used neutral terms to portray migrants, without depreciative terminology. However, newspapers

like Bild and magazine Focus had a more prejudiced coverage, easily associating refugees with crimes. The media's coverage of the refugee crisis and events like the Cologne New Year's Eve incident played a significant role in shaping public opinion. Following these events, migrants were increasingly portrayed as perpetrators of violence, while the growing violence against refugees received less attention. The events in Cologne and subsequent media coverage led to a turning point in German public opinion towards refugees. The media's focus shifted towards crimes committed by migrants, and the perception of refugees changed negatively. Manipulation techniques used by media outlets, such as imagery and framing, can significantly impact public opinion and reinforce prejudices and stereotypes.

The media reflects the polarization within German society on the issue of refugees. Reporting that leans too much in one direction attracts criticism from the opposing side. The media has a favourable narrative when it comes to the economic argument for accepting refugees. Migrants are seen as a positive factor in German economic development and competitiveness. The media's coverage of refugees varies at the local level, with limited coverage in local newspapers and a more significant presence on social media channels. In sum, the media's role in shaping public opinion on migration in Germany is influenced by political, social, and economic factors. The media reflects the polarization within society, tends to focus on political perspectives, and has a significant impact on how refugees and migrants are portrayed and perceived.

German Shrinking regions: experts and media narratives

Introduction

Shrinking regions are often portrayed as areas facing significant challenges in socio-economic and demographic factors. They are characterized by poor job opportunities, outmigration, declining services, residential vacancies, and decreasing public budgets. These regions are often in a state of urban decline and have difficulty maintaining social well-being, economic viability, and political stability (Meier 2022). However, it is also recognized that migration into these areas holds the potential to provide some revitalization and bring new life to these regions. Despite this potential, the long-term prospects

for these regions are often uncertain, and it is difficult to predict the effects of the demographic transition on their future development. Furthermore, shrinking regions are often depicted as peripheral and disempowered towns that face competition for social capital in a given configuration of limited access. However, the impacts of depopulation on these regions can vary greatly depending on a number of factors, and it is not necessarily true that these regions will have lower economic growth or higher unemployment rates compared to growing regions (Meier 2022).

Over the past few decades, small to mid-sized towns located in shrinking regions in Germany have been exploring ways to maintain or establish themselves as desirable places to live for both in-migrants and long-term residents, whether they originate domestically or from abroad. To achieve this goal, some of these towns have sought to tap into their own unique assets, such as particular economic profiles or the ability of local governments and welfare state actors to implement innovative approaches that foster social inclusion (Meier, Reverda & Van der Wouw 2015; Bernt 2018).

The objective of these notes is to synthesize the academic discourse of German scholars regarding the phenomenon of shrinking regions in the country, including how it is portrayed in academic discussions, and how it is reflected and communicated to the general public through German media. It is worth noting that German media outlets do not frequently utilize the terms “shrinking regions” or “shrinking towns” but rather opt for “rural areas” or “rural towns.”

Methodologically, this study adopts a qualitative research design, utilizing a literature and document review approach, and employing the snowball sampling method with keywords such as “Defining Shrinking”, “German Scholars on shrinking”, “German media on shrinking”, “Shrinking Germany”, and “Shrinking Thuringia” in Google, Google Scholar, Elgaronline, Taylor & Francis Online, and Wiley. In addition, this study incorporates data obtained through interviews with local stakeholders in Thuringia, and participant observation, to contextualize the findings within the local reality.

This essay commences by defining the concept of “shrinking” in accordance with German scholarly literature, including the shrinking phenomenon in Thuringia. In a second step, we bring in the contributions of the German Country Report to portray two German shrinking districts. Next, we present two pieces of the media about the shrinkage in Germany and their narratives, and finally, we bring in some analysis perspectives and concluding notes.

Conceptualising Shrinking

In this section, we provide an overview of the phenomenon of shrinking as defined by prominent German scholars in the field. The concept of shrinking here expressed will serve as the primary working concept hereafter.

According to Bernt (2018: 2120), shrinking is the general term used to describe cities that have lost a significant amount of population over a period of time. The definition of shrinkage is sometimes problematic with regard to the spatial levels examined - region, city or district – and the developments that give rise to very different problems and require different approaches to action. Similarly imprecise in the discussion are often the descriptions of causes and the explanations of connections between population losses and typical shrinkage problems (ibidem).

The term shrinkage has been used in very different contexts over the last decades, as it is shown below. In Germany, the term shrinkage has been used more widely since around the turn of the millennium. The preoccupations about the shrinkage phenomena are often associated with the federal-state programmes “Stadtumbau Ost” and “Stadtumbau West” (related to Urban Redevelopment) (ibidem).

Following Pallagst et al., “urban shrinkage is a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing regions, cities and parts of cities or metropolitan areas that are experiencing a dramatic decline in their economic and social bases and are facing population losses” (Pallagst, Martinez Fernandez & Wiechmann 2013: 3).

The German Country Report brings in the research of Küpper et al. (2018) and defines shrinking in a broader perspective: regions that are characterized by a lack of job opportunities, outmigration, declining services, residential vacancy, urban decay, and decreasing public budgets.

Another definition portrays shrinkage as a multidimensional process with profound restructuring in the economy, population and building structure. Population losses alone can also be an expression of cyclical migration. Häußermann and Siebel (2004: 10) summarise the challenges of shrinking cities and municipalities as follows:

...[it] does not lie in individual developments. Only the interplay of population losses with selective migration of qualified young workers, unsuccessful integration of immigrants, negative economic developments, high unemployment, decreasing municipal financial leeway, dissolution of the urban form and thinning out of the supply of goods and services creates an urban crisis in which negative developments can intensify into a vicious circle.

The Impact of Urban Shrinkage in Thuringia: the Peculiarities of Post-Socialist Transformations

Thus, according to Haase, Rink & Grossmann (2016: 305), urban shrinkage presents a significant challenge for cities, their inhabitants, and decision-makers. The loss of population can result in changes to the dynamics of urban development and the decline in demands for various urban functions, such as public transportation. This can lead to the need for adaptations to the transport

network, overburdened service infrastructures for the elderly, and the closure of schools and kindergartens. The declining demand in the housing market can impact prices, affecting choice, and investment decisions, and leading to lower rents, neighbourhood decay, and increased segregation. Urban governance actors may face reduced resources, requiring a change in the mode of urban development steering.

Shrinkage in Thuringia, as a post-socialist region of East Germany, has some peculiarity in this phenomenon due to its post-socialist transformation which caused a major impact on urban development, especially on population growth. After 1990, the trend of urban shrinkage shifted from post-industrial cities in Western Europe to Eastern Europe. Many post-socialist cities experienced shrinkage after 1989, while others started to shrink earlier but saw an acceleration after 1989. The shrinkage can be seen as a direct result of the political and social changes brought about by the 1989 political shift. The rapid change in urban population and population movements was due to factors such as a drop in birth rates, suburbanization, and out-migration caused by economic decline and job losses. During state socialism, population losses were not publicly acknowledged for ideological reasons. Despite the political and ideological changes after the transformation, the situation remained unchanged, with urban population losses continuously ignored by the scientific community, policy-makers, and the public in favor of pro-growth and catch-up strategies (Haase, Rink & Grossmann (2016: 306). Very often shrinkage, particularly in the state of Thuringia, leads to socio-economic segregation, as it was the case of mid-sized town of Gera analysed by Huntington (2022).

In Gera, declining population over time has resulted in changes in the distribution of socio-economic groups in the city. Using data on the labor market to measure socio-economic status, researchers have analysed segregation levels and mapped the spatial distribution of different socio-economic groups from 1990 to 2017. The results show that segregation is increasing and that more affluent and less affluent groups are becoming more concentrated in certain areas of the city. This trend suggests that the declining population in Gera is not only shaping the city's socio-spatial structure but also amplifying inequalities. Additionally, areas of population decline seem to overlap with areas where vulnerable households are overrepresented (Huntington 2022). Following, we bring in the portrayal of the German Country report regarding the designated shrinking regions in Germany.

The Country Report portrays two Shrinking Cases

The report examines two shrinking areas in particular, the Altenburger Land district in the federal state of Thuringia (East Germany) and the Rhein-Hunsrück district in Rhineland-Palatinate (West Germany). Both states are nearly equal in size. Additionally, several regions within them have undergone socioeconomic

and demographic transformations and implemented revitalization strategies while becoming destinations for non-European migrants starting in 2015 (Meier 2022).

The study posits that the immigration of non-EU migrants to these areas has generated hope for shrinking small and mid-sized towns (SMST) that are struggling to maintain viability. However, it is unclear whether these areas will appeal to migrants in the long term, as the living conditions in these regions are dependent on several factors, including local conditions and government policies.

Meier (2022) goes on and asserts that small and mid-sized towns in shrinking areas are searching for strategies to remain attractive places of residency, both for migrants and long-term residents, by leveraging their endogenous potentials such as their economic profiles or the organization of local governments and welfare state actors. These strategies aim to foster social inclusion through innovative actions. The revitalization efforts of certain districts, such as Altenburger Land, Rhein-Hunsrück, additionally, Saalfeld-Rudolstadt, provide examples of sustainable development.

However, shrinking regions also correspond to peripheralisation, and SMST in these areas have a relatively weak position in the hierarchical network of cities and regions. The effects of the demographic transition on the future development of SMST in shrinking areas are complex and difficult to predict. For example, studies have shown that depopulation does not necessarily correspond to lower economic growth or unemployment compared to growing regions (Meier 2022).

Small and mid-sized towns in shrinking German areas try to reinvent themselves. Small and mid-sized towns in shrinking areas, such as Altenburg, and Saalfeld are searching for strategies to become (or stay) attractive places of residence for migrants and long-term residents – whether from abroad or from German regions. Some of these strategies aim to unlock endogenous potentials like certain economic profiles or the organisation of local governments and welfare state actors who are able to employ innovative actions in favour of social inclusion (Meier, Reverda & Van der Wouw 2015).

The strategies and plans of Altenburger Land and Saalfeld-Rudolstadt districts, for example, to revitalise their shrinking areas, made it possible to bring into light the concept of sustainable development. In the Saalfeld-Rudolstadt district, a highly qualified professional was hired to draft a sustainable development plan for the district.



Fig.32

Views of Altenburg: the market square (above) and a poorly conserved building (on the right). Photos: The author.



Fig.33

Views of Saalfeld: the market square (above) and the city house (on the right). Photos: The author.

Media Narratives about Shrinking

When the matter is shrinking, German media tend to maintain a technical narrative, focusing on the demographical numbers and trends. An example of this is a report by the main weekly German magazine on 6 April 2019, as shown in figure 34:

Demografie: Wo Deutschland schrumpft und wo es wächst

6 de abr. de 2019 — Forscher haben untersucht, wie zukunftsfähig die deutschen Städte und Landkreise sind. Wie sieht es in Ihrer Region aus?

However, Der Spiegel also reported on shrinking regions in Germany with a different perspective: Half Empty: The Slow, Painful Demise of Rural Germany. With hard words and permeated with real people and mayors' stories, the magazine portrayed rural Germany as full of suffering in a slow process of

Fig.34

Headlines of Der Spiegel on 6 April 2019. Translation: Demography: Where Germany shrinks and where it grows. Researchers have studied how sustainable Germany's cities and districts are. How does it look in your region?

disappearing, as shown in figure 35. The exodus of young people, according to the report, is the cause.

Half Empty

The Slow, Painful Demise of Rural Germany

A massive exodus is causing cities across Germany to swell while draining rural areas of people, money and life. While funds are needed elsewhere, should more be done to save dying communities? By SPIEGEL Staff

Fig.35

Headlines of Der Spiegel on 12 May 2011. Report published in English (translated from the original in German).

Rural Exodus

The shrinking regions in Germany are depicted by the report of Der Spiegel as a rural exodus and illustrated with a picture of two elderly people going shopping in a mobile market that comes to the village once a week (Figure 36 below). Young people more and more abandon their home villages and towns and settled in metropolitan areas seeking better opportunities, while the ones who stay simple admit: "We're just getting old." "A massive exodus is causing cities across Germany to swell while draining rural areas of people, money and life. While funds are needed elsewhere, should more be done to save dying communities?", asks the report (Der Spiegel 2011).

The report goes on about the effect of the exodus in one rural town:

Just take the figures: 85 out of the town's 820 houses are empty. The town had 3,000 inhabitants not too long ago, but now there are only 1,900. When elderly citizens have passed away, there has been no one there to replace them.

"Nobody lives there anymore either," xx [the mayor] says, pointing to a mint-green single-family house. The industrial bakery moved to the east, he explains, and the area in front of the former garden furniture factory is full of dandelions. The Edeka grocery store closed its doors for good last year, and no trains have passed through the town since 1994.

To make matters worse for xx [the mayor], even his daughter has moved away now, to Munich, because that's where the jobs are.

Der Spiegel 2011

And when it comes to money, the scenario is not good at all, as most state contributions to municipalities depend on their population. But since people are moving away, the municipality of Nordhalben, for example, has had to borrow €3.5 million just to make ends meet. "We're now taking out loans just to pay off our other loans," says the mayor. "If we were a company, we'd be a classic case of insolvency."

The report mapped the abandoned regions, measuring in percentage in population loss and contrasting where the population is growing in Germany. The report goes on with its gloomy scenario:

Similar situations can be found all across rural Germany. Since there aren't enough local jobs, people are forced to commute. Since they buy their groceries on the way home from work, the village stores are eventually forced to close. When clubs and associations start to dissolve, solidarity disappears. Then people move away, and a vicious cycle -- with an inevitable end -- is set in motion. (Der Spiegel 2011).



Fig.36

A portrayal of the shrinking, rural Germany. Photo: DDP / Der Spiegel (2011)

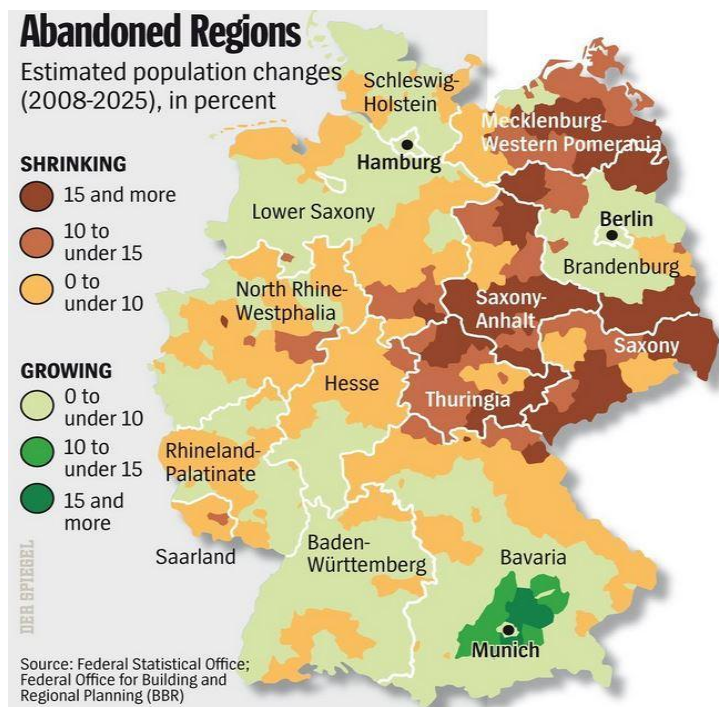


Fig.37

Map of shrinking and growing regions in Germany. Source: Der Spiegel (2011).

Urban shrinkage presents a significant challenge for cities, their residents, and decision-makers. In Thuringia, a post-socialist region of East Germany, the political and social changes brought about by the 1989 political shift have caused a major impact on urban development, especially population growth. This rapid change in population and movements has resulted in socio-economic segregation, a decline in the housing market, and reduced resources for urban governance actors. In the mid-sized town of Gera, research shows that segregation is increasing and socioeconomic disparities are becoming more pronounced.

The post-socialist transformation in Thuringia has contributed to the decline in population, which continued focus on pro-growth and catch-up strategies. Overall, the shrinking population in Thuringia, and particularly in Gera, Altenburg and Saalfeld, highlights the need for adaptations in urban development and governance to address the challenges posed by population decline, such as the attraction of new sustainable business, requalification of local labour, strengthening of migration inclusion initiatives steered by the government of Thuringia, repositioning of the abandoned and peripheralization narratives into a positive, constructive tone, among others.

Der Spiegel portrays rural Germany as facing a slow and painful decline due to a massive migration of people to cities. This migration has drained rural areas of people, money, and life. As a result, many rural towns are struggling financially and are unable to replace elderly citizens who have passed away. The declining population is causing a loss of state contributions to municipalities, which depend on their population number. This loss of funding has resulted in many communities having to borrow money just to keep up with their expenses.

This financial hardship is compounded by the lack of job opportunities in rural areas, which is forcing young people to move to the cities in search of employment. The government's solution of "orienting" struggling regions to form alliances with nearby regions has caused an uproar among rural communities who feel abandoned.

The declining population leads to a vicious cycle where businesses and clubs close, and solidarity disappears, making it even more difficult for people to live in these rural areas, which eventually leads to people moving away.

The decline of rural areas is a phenomenon that is spreading from eastern Germany to the western part of the country, and it is further exacerbated by the shrinking German population and the declining number of immigrants. The migration of people and businesses to cities has left rural areas with a lack of funding, making them less attractive, and leading to a decline in their disposable income.

The narrative or frame of “Half Empty: The Slow, Painful Demise of Rural Germany” suggests that the problem of shrinking rural areas in Germany is a serious and ongoing issue that has negative effects on the communities, such as loss of people, money, and vitality. The narrative used is a stigmatic one and implies that this is causing a painful and slow death for rural areas and raises questions about the need for more actions to be taken, such as attracting refugees and migrants, to save these communities. The title (using words such as Empty, Demise, and Exodus) implies that massive migration from rural areas to cities is happening and it is contributing to the problem and highlights the need for resources to be redirected to these areas to help reverse the trend.

Scholars and the media in Germany typically depict rural shrinkage as a complex issue with multiple causes such as demographic changes, employment difficulties, and migration towards urban areas in search of job opportunities and better quality of life. The media often highlights the challenges faced by rural communities such as the decline of local businesses, the ageing population, and declining social services, as well as the potential long-term consequences for the country's economy and society. Additionally, the media may also showcase initiatives and efforts being made to address the issue and revive rural areas, such as investment in infrastructure, support for entrepreneurship and innovation, and incentives for people to move to and settle in rural areas.

Final Remarks

The reports that were brought in depicted rural towns and villages as struggling political entities that are trying to survive by providing the minimum for a decent life to their citizens and positioning themselves as attractive places. In their revitalization strategies, sustainable development has a place in their strategies. However, they suffer from the prejudice of peripheralization, which places them in a weaker position in the cities and regions' competition for the attraction of all sorts of capital, especially human capital.

In the German country report (Meier 2022), the phenomenon of “shrinking areas” was analyzed with a focus on two regions: the Altenburger Land

district in Thuringia and the Rhein-Hunsrück district in Rhineland-Palatinate. The Welcoming Spaces project posits that “welcoming spaces” in these areas emerge as a response to these challenges, as immigration brings increased tax revenue, helps to maintain essential services, and provides a source of the workforce, very often a specialized one.

Small and mid-sized towns in shrinking areas are searching for ways to make themselves attractive to both migrants and long-term residents from within Germany. The strategies and plans of the Altenburger Land and Saalfeld-Rudolstadt districts, for instance, aim to revitalize these areas by promoting sustainable development and unlocking their economic and social potential. However, the effects of the demographic transition on small and mid-sized towns in shrinking regions are complex and difficult to predict. Studies have shown that depopulation does not necessarily result in lower economic growth or higher unemployment rates compared to growing European regions. Furthermore, the relative position of small and mid-sized towns in shrinking areas within the hierarchical network of cities and regions is weak, making it challenging for these towns to deal with the pressures of urban restructuring. In conclusion, the different sources we brought in this essay provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by shrinking areas and the strategies that small and mid-sized towns in these areas are employing to maintain their viability and build a different narrative.

Media Discourses and Narratives on Welcoming Initiatives

The Welcoming Spaces project in Germany searched for welcoming initiatives in shrinking districts in the federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Thuringia and has selected them in eight localities. In a further phase, we have looked closer to these localities and, we have finally chosen the two districts. Most of the initiatives we found in the eight selected districts are government-driven or migrant/citizen/NGO-driven, while none of them were business-driven. The welcoming initiatives are different regarding their size, reach, goals, organizational form and target groups. The chosen welcoming initiatives comprise (i) associations (non-profit organizations, sometimes funded by the (federal) state, sometimes organised by migrants themselves and/or volunteers); (ii) municipal advisory Boards for Migration and Integration (non-profit, governmental-driven); (iii) actors which are part of welfare state organisations (non-profit) and (iv) integration officers (and other social service advisors) financed by the state (Meier, 2023).

Welcoming initiatives aim to provide access to societal subsystems, social networks and concrete physical places. It is argued that all actors (i.e. individuals, associations and public institutions) who work together to boost the participation of non-EU migrants (and long-term residents), constitute the 'multiscalar social field of welcoming spaces'. From the viewpoint of those migrants who 'receive' support, a welcoming initiative is part of their opportunity structure in small and mid-sized shrinking towns (Meier, 2023). As these welcoming initiatives are located in small/medium towns, they do not receive much attention from the mass media. However, we have found a few cases. We selected three reports on two initiatives in Altenburg, Thuringia: Futura Association and Caritas Altenburg.

Futura Association

The newspaper Leipziger Volkszeitung (LVZ), as well as OVZ Altenburger Land featured the welcoming initiative Futura Association in Altenburg. This is an association that plays an important role in facilitating the integration of refugees and migrants into the local community, including political debates and public manifestations.

The report highlights the precarious situation faced by the Futura Association in Altenburger Land due to a lack of financial support from the state. Futura Coordinator Ivy Bieber does not know how much longer the integration association can hold out.



Fig.38

Futura Coordinator Ivy Bieber in front of the association.
Source: LVZ/OVZ. Photo by Mario Jahn (2022)

The publication describes that the association, dedicated to integration and social work, has been struggling for nearly five months, with limited resources and staffing. The article emphasizes the urgency of funding and the impact on their ability to provide essential services, the precarious situation of refugee social work and integration efforts in Altenburger Land. The report also highlights the consequences faced due to the lack of financial security, including the loss of a crucial social worker, and as a consequence, the restricted services, and personal financial struggles for those involved in the initiative:

"I don't know how I will pay my rent" "I don't know how much longer we can hold on. With a minimal staff, without a social worker, and with only two people, very little is possible," says Bieber. "Personally, I don't know how I will pay my rent. I haven't received any money this year.

LVZ, 2022a

The report portrays the Futura Association as a vital resource for integration efforts, underscoring the importance of supporting such initiatives. The narrative expresses a sympathetic tone towards the association's challenges and highlights the critical role they play in the community.

Futura on the Verge of Closure

In a previous report, the same newspaper on 1st January 2022, came with an Op-ad, critical article: "Futura Altenburg on the Verge of Closure - Is this Effort Even Supported by Politics?" The article goes on:

The looming threat to the Futura Association in Altenburg raises the suspicion that the state's commitment to inclusive refugee social work may be half-hearted, according to LVZ reporter Dana Weber.

The collaborators of the Futura Association in Altenburg rightfully wonder if their dedication to inclusive refugee work is truly supported by politics. If the state of Thuringia proceeds with the planned drastic cuts to integration work in 2022, the non-profit association may face closure sooner rather than later. The recurring procedure of project application, the reliance on state funds, and the uncertainty about whether work can continue in the following year are already exhausting and detrimental to the association's efforts. Now, the entire existence of the integration alliance is at stake. Unless a financial miracle occurs, conjuring up the missing 37,000 euros for the coming year, the social commitment of the Futura Association may soon come to an end.

This would mean that the power play of the state parliament or the state government would sacrifice urgently needed integration work that aims to improve the coexistence of people with and without a migration background in Altenburger Land. The responsibility lies with the political sphere, and they must consider the value they place on refugee social work and integration. The Futura Association is bravely resisting political disregard. How long its collaborators can endure this uncertainty is uncertain. Much dedication beyond regular working hours is invested

LVZ, 2022b

The report follows a narrative critical and concerned tone. It questions the level of commitment and support from the political authorities towards integrative refugee social work. The narrative calls on the political leaders to reflect on the value they assign to refugee social work and integration efforts. Overall, the tone is one of advocacy and urgency.

From a discourse analysis perspective, the narrative used towards Futura Association can be classified as an advocacy and critical discourse, as the narrative advocates for the importance of integrative refugee social work and questions whether it is truly valued by the political authorities. It emphasizes the positive impact of Futura's work on the community. Finally, it also adopts an activist tone, as the narrative encourages action and reflection from the political leaders, urging them to consider the value of refugee social work and integration efforts.

ZDF highlights the efforts of an Altenburger initiative

Nargiz Gurbanova, a Ukrainian lawyer, is a former refugee herself and currently a dedicated member of Caritas Altenburg, a local initiative that was studied in our project. Her primary focus lies in assisting fellow Ukrainians in navigating the German bureaucratic system, helping them obtain the essential documents required for legal residence in the country. Additionally, she aids them in accessing educational resources for their children, language courses, training programs, and employment opportunities.

The report characterizes the initiative's efforts as a facilitator, aimed at assisting the transition for newcomers from Ukraine. The media employs a humanitarian narrative to depict the work undertaken by Caritas.

The report summarizes it: "Even a year after the outbreak of the war, refugee families are still looking for housing and employment. The program aims to explore the possibilities for providing assistance, as well as examining whether the integration of refugees into the job market can be successful. Positive examples, as well as challenges and obstacles, will illustrate how society and the economy are dealing with the new situation" (ZDF, 2023, n/p).



Fig.39

Nargiz Gurbanova, a Ukrainian lawyer, portrayed in a TV report. Source: ZDF, 2023.

Final Remarks

For this report on media discourses and narratives towards German welcoming initiatives, we have selected three reports on two different initiatives (Futura Association and Caritas Altenburg) in the city of Altenburg. These reports allow us to observe some commonalities and draw some conclusions, such as (i) financial precarity: Futura Association is struggling due to a lack of financial support from the state of Thuringia; (ii) advocacy for integration: all reports advocate for the importance of integrative refugee social work; they emphasize the positive impact of these initiatives on the community and highlight their role in facilitating the integration of refugees and migrants into the local community; (iii) critical tone (there is a critical tone in all three reports, expressing concern about the potential consequences if the initiatives do not receive the necessary financial support; and (iv) Humanitarian Perspective (the reports approach the initiatives from a humanitarian perspective, stressing the importance of their work in facilitating the integration of refugees and migrants.

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POLAND

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Narratives on migration, shrinking areas and welcoming spaces: a focus on the Polish context

Introduction

The research is focused on three main topics: migrants and migration; shrinking areas and welcoming spaces. The aim of the report is to analyze the narratives relating to these themes. The research adopts 2014-2022 as the period of analysis. These are the successive programming periods of the European Union. The years selected for the analysis are also important from the point of view of changes in Poland's migration situation in the European context and the evolution of Polish migration policy (regulations and practices). In 2015, power in Poland was taken over by the Law and Justice party, which again won the parliamentary elections in 2019. During its rule, especially in the first years, the anti-refugee discourse intensified in Poland. In 2015-2017, Poland did not implement the EU temporary relocation mechanism, which assumed the transfer of asylum seekers from countries particularly affected by the so-called migration crisis, i.e. Greece and Italy, to other EU countries. The year 2021 brought a humanitarian crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border and a closed-door policy for migrants from the MENA region, with multiple pushbacks and impeding access to the asylum procedure. In turn, at the end of February 2022, Poland became the main country receiving people fleeing Ukraine after Russian aggression on its territory. In this case, an open-door policy for Ukrainian citizens was observed. This is a situation where Poland applies double standards on the same eastern border on its two different parts (Pachocka 2022). This is also accompanied by two contradictory narratives - about "illegal migration" on the border with Belarus, which threatens the security of the state, and about Ukrainian refugees in need of protection. Recent years have also seen a growing scale of the influx of migrants (of various status and in different situations) to Poland and accelerated transformation into a country of new immigration.

The analysis was prepared for the following documents and source materials:

- documents from the national level concerning development management and migration issues in general;
- documents from the regional level - voivodeship development strategies. The analysis covered all regions in Poland and all current strategies in 2015-2022;
- local media and internet resources for two selected localities, i.e. Łuków and Łomża - the selection of these localities resulted from previous research and analysis on welcoming initiatives;
- publications, reports developed by think tanks;
- press publications from selected national media for 2015 and 2022, separately for the topics of depopulation and migration.

All content was critically analyzed using key words relating to migration and migrants, shrinking areas and welcoming spaces.

The development management system in Poland is hierarchical in nature. Documents developed and adopted for the national level provide guidance for regional documents. Therefore, in order to analyze the discourse on migrants and migration policy in Poland, national documents were analyzed (both referring to development policy and migration policy). The analysis also looked at how depopulation is covered in national documents. The main document defining the directions of Poland's development is the Strategy for Responsible Development until 2020 (with an outlook until 2030), called SRD. This document refers to the issue of migration, but to a limited extent. It sees migration primarily as "an opportunity to reduce the risks of demographic transition" (p. 12). The document notes that since 2014, the migration situation in Poland has been dominated by an increased influx of Ukrainian nationals due to the economic and political situation there, but this immigration is mainly circular, with migrants working mainly in sectors and professions less attractive to Polish nationals (pp. 151-152). The SRD sees migration policy as an instrument for human resource management and counteracting depopulation. It is indicated that a new migration policy of the country is necessary, as the one conducted so far is starting to encounter certain barriers and potential threats. A new migration policy at the national level has also become a necessity due to the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine and the influx of war refugees into Poland. Among the measures concerning migrants envisaged by the SRD are (p. 170-171):

- preparation of a concept of responsible immigration policy, oriented to the needs of the labour market and Polish entrepreneurs,
- creation of integration paths for selected categories of foreigners and members of their families, e.g. for employees with qualifications and competences most needed by the Polish labour market,
- reduction of the phenomenon of illegal immigration,
- development of integration instruments,
- development of the sector of non-governmental organisations acting on behalf of foreigners, including immigrant organisations,
- conducting information and education activities addressed to the Polish society on the positive role of foreigners.

To a larger extent, the SRD addresses the issue of depopulation - the diagnostic part of the document presents projections of population changes in the 2050 perspective (pp. 150-151). The document emphasises that depopulation is a particular call for urban development policy (pp. 176-178).

A document directly related to regional policy is the National Strategy for Regional Development 2030 (NSRD 2030). In NSRD 2030, in the context of mi-

gration, it is only stated that within the framework of increasing labour market resources, regional policy will support the development of integration instruments, e.g. aimed at immigrants coming to Poland (e.g. learning the Polish language, culture and customs, improving access to housing, support in dealing with official matters) (p. 67). Also, it refers to the issue of depopulation to a greater extent, specifying the provisions of the SRD. It mentions cities and regions particularly at risk of this process (p. 36). The document clearly emphasises that increasing the attractiveness of a place of residence (also in the environmental context) and accessibility (including transport) may lead to inhibiting depopulation, especially in small and medium-sized cities of eastern Poland (p. 50). The National Strategy for Regional Development 2030 recognises depopulation as one of the main factors in identifying problem areas in Poland. Also, the National Strategy for Regional Development 2020 (NSRD 2020) focuses primarily on the problem of depopulation as a barrier to development and indicates areas particularly threatened by this process (p. 30-35).

In the years 2014-2022, there was no single official strategic document of Polish migration policy. One can even speak of a vacuum in this regard. This is mainly due to the political situation in the country and the change of government into right-wing political coalition in 2015.

During this period, the attention may be drawn to the following documents or their draft/preliminary versions:

- 'Polish Migration Policy—Current State of Play and Proposed Actions' (Zespół do Spraw Migracji, 2011) – adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2012 and cancelled by the Law and Justice government in 2017,
- the project of 'Polish Foreigners Integration Policy: Assumptions and Guidelines', announced by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in 2013, to complement the above-mentioned document in the area of integration activities, never adopted,
- a draft of 'Poland's Migration Policy' (Zespół do Spraw Migracji, 2019) – made public in 2019, however, not on the website of the ministry of the interior and administration,
- the document 'Polish migration policy - diagnosis of the initial state' (Zespół do Spraw Migracji, 2020) – made public in 2020,
- a draft document of 'Poland's migration policy - directions of action 2021-2022' – made public in 2021 by the ministry .

It is important to add, that the 2012 strategy was invalidated at the request of the Minister of the Interior, because in his opinion it did not match the problems facing the country and did not take into account the consequences of the migration crisis in Europe. Ultimately, two aspects of migration policy were to be crucial in the future - the impact on the labor market and the security of citizens (Sobczak 2017).

Then, "(...) in June 2019 a draft document titled "Poland's Migration Policy" was made public, but has not been officially published on government websites.

This document was heavily criticised by representatives of various communities, including academia (commented in public by both individual researchers and bodies such as the Committee on Migration Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences – KBnM PAN) and non-governmental organisations (e.g. the Association for Legal Intervention – SIP) and the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights – HFHR). In its position, KBnM PAN recommended that the draft should be rejected altogether and works started from scratch, pointing out that the published version of the document had not been subjected to open and transparent public consultations with key stakeholders and experts in migration, scientists, representatives of non-governmental organisations and local governments, and that its content had not been based on scientific evidence thus leading to numerous errors and perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices. The document is focused on the prospect of Poland being endangered by migration and the need to shift the future migration policy towards a broadly understood security, with migrants being instrumentally regarded as foreign labour force. In the opinion of the HFHR, some passages of the document raised concerns as to their compliance with the EU law and international law. What is more, the proposed approach, which the Foundation found to have a xenophobic tone, may result in the violation of fundamental freedoms and human rights” (Pachocka and Szczerba Zawada 2019, p. 61). The 2019 draft, after being heavily criticized, ended up in the political bin. In 2020, a new document was prepared to diagnose the migration situation in the country, it was to be the basis for the findings and recommendations of the new migration policy of Poland. In connection with it, a draft executive document was developed in 2021, but never adopted. Thus, in recent years there has been no binding document that would officially outline the priorities of Polish migration policy and its implementation. All above-mentioned documents have one in common – they emphasised Poland’s demographic and socio-economic interests and the importance of foreigners as economic migrants contributing to the national labour market.

Migration, depopulation and welcoming spaces in documents at the regional level

Voivodeship development strategies are key documents that define development policy. In the analysed period, two development strategies were developed in almost all voivodeships. The first edition analysed are documents until 2020 (or 2025). The second edition of the strategies are new documents developed from 2020 with a timeframe of 2030. The analysis of both editions of the strategies allows conclusions to be drawn regarding the evaluation of the content related to depopulation and migration and migrants in the strategies.

Method of analysing the strategies

Each of the analysed documents was searched automatically for keywords (see Table 1).

Main topic	Keywords (Polish)
migrants and migration	MIGRAC*
	MIGRAN*
	CUDZOZIEM*
shrinking areas	WYLUDNIAN*
	DEPOPULAC*
welcoming spaces	PRZYJAZN*

Fig. 1
Keywords in the contest main topics.

The analysis not only referred to the content, but also to the elements (parts) of the strategies they contain. Whether it is the diagnosis (which indicates development problems) or the objectives and directions of activities - i.e. the intentions to be implemented. A detailed analysis of the content of the Strategy can be found in Annex 1 (attached file).

- The strategies address the problems of depopulation (shrinking areas) to the greatest extent. The diagnoses include detailed analyses of depopulation and demographic projections.
- In this context, migration is mainly analysed as internal migration (if already foreign, then economic emigration of Poles to Western Europe) and depopulation as the main barrier to development.
- Few strategies analyse migration as an element of broader European and global trends.
- The lack of a national migration policy is considered a problem in conducting regional policy. In 5 analysed documents there is a reference to migration policy conducted at the voivodeship level (its assumptions are included in only one document).
- Strategies refer to migrants most often in the context of the labour market, sometimes in the context of employment and business facilitation.
- In the objectives and directions of activities included in the strategies, in 12 cases we find a reference to the integration of migrants, less often to their inclusion. In one strategy, migrants are explicitly mentioned as one of the groups particularly vulnerable to exclusion.
- In the strategies, single objectives can be identified for raising the knowledge and awareness of the inhabitants of the region about the role of immigration in socio-economic development.
- Two instances of a negative notion towards migrants in the strategies were identified - one strategy mentions the spread of infectious diseases from cross-border migration, the other sees migrants as increasing the risk of conflict in tension-free regions.
- There is no reference to welcoming space in the strategies. The approach closest to the WS project can be found in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Strategy 2030 Operational objective: "Satisfactory work" High-quality jobs, competitive in terms of wages as well as providing a basis for optimistic thinking about the future of each employee combined with quality of life should encourage not only current residents of the region but also domestic and foreign immigrants to realise their life ambitions. (p. 35) and in Podlaskie 2030 Operational Objective: "Hospitable region", direction of intervention: Raising the awareness of the region's residents about the role of immigration in socio-economic development (p. 67).
- The analysis reveals an evolution of strategic documents - newer ones (especially those developed after 2020) acknowledge the problem of migration and migrants to a greater extent (in general), although certainly not in the entirety of the WS project. The evolution of documents can best be seen on the example of Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeships.

The analysis of the discourse on welcoming initiatives at the local level

Method of analysing the strategies

The analysis of the discourse on welcoming initiatives at the local level was carried out on the example of two cities – Łomża (60,000 inhabitants) and Łuków (30,000 inhabitants). Previous studies have shown that in these cities there was quite a lot of welcoming initiatives, so it should be reflected in the media discourse. Based on the list of welcoming initiatives undertaken in the selected cities, we have identified key words according to which we analyzed content published on the Internet (see: Table 2). The search was done by entering a keyword into the google search engine. All content that was related to the keyword (unrelated content was ignored) was analyzed through the following categories:

- How many articles/information were found. In attachment there is a table with a list of links to all content that was found
 - Where the content was published: local coverage (official municipal websites or local media), regional media, national media
 - Way of narration: informative – emotionally neutral, positive exposure of the problem, negative exposure of the problem
- When searching for information, we did not set limits when it comes to the time of publication of materials. However, the vast majority concerned 2022, a few concerned the time before 2020.

Key words	Key words - translation
Fundacja Ocalenie Łomża	Ocalenie Foundation Łomża
Dzień Uchodźcy Łomża	Łomża Refugee Day
Fundacja Ocalenie świetlica Łomża	Children daycare Ocalenie Foundation Łomża
Pomoc uchodźcom Łomża	Help for refugees in Łomża
Łomża pomoc Ukraińcom	Łomża help for Ukrainians
Stowarzyszenie dla ziemi Łuków	Association for the Earth Łuków
Dzień uchodźcy Łuków	Łuków Refugee Day
Kolektyw Kobiet Łuków	Womens Collective Łuków
Rzeczy drugie Łuków	Second Things Łuków
Notesy z Łukowa	Notebooks from Łuków
Wasze Rzeczy Łuków	Your Things Łuków
Pomoc uchodźcom Łuków	Help for refugees in Łuków
Łuków pomoc Ukraińcom	Łuków help for Ukrainians

Fig.2
Key words

In Łomża the most important actor in terms of migrant integration was NGO - the Ocalenie Foundation. They organised many activities, the most important were children day-care, where children in school age can go after school and Polish volunteers help them to do their homework and learn Polish. Cultural events and educational workshops were held to bring the refugee culture closer to the hosting community, to break stereotypes and allay fears. One of such events is Refugee Day. Łuków hosts Centre for asylum seekers. In this city there is an active NGO - Association for Earth, this NGO addresses most of its activities to women living in Centre for Asylum Seekers. The most important initiative of the NGO is the Women's Collective. This is an organisation gathering women due to perform needlework, small tailoring and craft work (the previous name of this initiative it was Craft for Dignity). Due to make their work more inspiring they cooperate with an artist from big Polish city, who is sometimes coming to Łuków, cocreating some products with women, she teaches them how to create some product and then – let the women do it on their own. This is how the Notebooks from Łuków were created – handmade notebooks, made out of paper from recycling covered with silver cover made out of coffee beans packages. These notebooks are sold in fancy – socially responsible cafes and most famous Polish art galleries. The Women's Collective initiative has two aims: giving inspiration to refugee women, giving them the dignity but also letting them earn some small money (as according to the national law they cannot work regularly). Earning money became possible thanks to starting another initiative – The Second Things – which is a charity shop where secondhand clothes and products made by Women's Collective are sold. Another initiative organized by Women's Collective in cooperation with an artist (it's always the same artist) was an exhibition – Your Things. The product created in this initiative was a long fabric created out of pieces of clothes that were gathered for refugee women (Association for Earth organized some collection of clothes among Polish people. As a result they have gathered far too many clothes, and there was no idea what to do with them. What's important some of the clothes were unsuitable for Muslim women). This is how "Your Things" exhibition fabric idea was created. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, resulted in a situation in which local communities, municipalities, NGOs and entrepreneurs across Poland to organize and help refugees from Ukraine. These were most often gatherings of clothing, food, hygiene products, money. Accommodation was organized for refugees: both in institutions and in private houses. Many urban services were made available to Ukrainians for free, such as urban transport. A free offer of entertainment for Ukrainians was created, charity events were organized during which money was collected. Offices

and their subordinate institutions, the church, Caritas, NGOs, individual residents and entrepreneurs (small, local and global companies) were involved in helping the refugees. We called these activities “help for refugees”, “help for Ukrainians” and included them in the discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis

The analysis of the discourse carried out according to the indicated methodology showed that media interest in welcoming initiatives was very small at the level of local media, even smaller at the regional level, practically non-existent at the national level. The content was also posted on the websites of municipalities and other actors involved organization of an event. There was no in-depth reflection on the phenomenon of migration, integration or the long-term goal of the initiatives undertaken. The posted content was purely informative, emotionally neutral, sometimes slightly positive in its message.

Analysis of the discourse on selected initiatives

Łomża

There was almost no articles or information about activity of Foundation Ocalenie and children daycare run by this NGO (6 in total). The articles found concerned problems of NGO with finding new office, one article described some event organised by Foundation in the past. Articles concerning children daycare focused on necessity of engaging volunteers in its activity. The Refugee Day was much better described (12 articles). The information found was published on the websites of the event organizers, but also in local and regional media. The published content was neutral and informative. Also, a small number of materials concerned the issues of “help for refu-

gees”/ “help for Ukrainians”. The published content was informative – how and where you can help and what actions have already been taken. It was reported how many refugees benefited from the aid in Łomża, how many beds were available, which entrepreneurs joined the aid activities. Local government also distributed information on the government aid programs being introduced – e.g. where and what application should be submitted to obtain funding for accommodation offered to Ukrainians. Basically, however, the content was informative, with a neutral emotional tinge. A lot of information was published on the websites of the city hall and its subordinate units and on the web pages of other organizations involved in help. The media (local, regional and in 2-3 cases national) duplicated information from official websites. A detailed analysis of the information published on the website of the city hall showed that about 25 articles were published, of which the vast majority in February, March, in April 3 information pieces, in May 1. Later, nothing was published about helping the Ukrainians. All content concerning the initiatives in Łomża was very laconic and concise in terms of volume and substantive content.

Łuków

The number of materials published on the welcoming initiatives in Łuków was not large, but there was a greater variety of entities publishing the content than it was in Łomża. These articles were also often longer than those concerning initiatives in Łomża, the assumptions of individual initiatives were described in a more detail, some articles had a slightly positive narration towards refugees. Only two articles were published about the Association for Earth in a regional newspaper, but it described the activities carried out by NGOs at length (the tone of the article was neutral, or slightly positive towards refugee women). Under the keyword Refugee Day Łuków we found 6 articles (one of which from 2014). The content was published by the entities involved in the organization of the event – the primary school and the police, one article published in a local newspaper presented a broader reflection on refugees from Syria and Iraq and life in centers for asylum seekers. On the subject of the Women’s Collective, we found 4 articles from 2022, in which the new project of the Association for the Earth “Collective - Included” was presented. One of these articles was quite extensive, widely commenting on the situation in which women from the center for asylum seekers find themselves and the assumptions of the project. Articles were published on local and regional portals, their content was neutral (or with a slight posi-

tive accent) towards refugees. Only two articles we found under the keyword “Second Things”, but they did not concern the exhibition itself – it was about the artist involved in its creation and the grant under which it was created. Notebooks from Łuków is definitely the mostly commented in media initiative (which results from its artistic character and the artist’s involvement in its creation). The content published was very diverse – from the description of the initiative itself (or more broadly: activities undertaken by Women’s Collective or even more broadly: actions taken with and towards migrants), through interviews with the artist involved in initiating Notebooks, to information about bookbinding workshops organized by Women’s Collective. The content was published on the websites of organizations (e.g. from Warsaw) organizing workshops, art galleries, socially engaged portals with articles (including a very well-known one: *Krytyka Polityczna*), in nationwide magazines (*Przekrój*). In total, we found 23 articles and pieces of information about the initiative, the tone was neutral or positive towards refugees. A small number of materials concerned the issues of “help for refugees”/“help for Ukrainians”. The published content was informative. It was reported what help is needed, what actions were taken, which entrepreneurs joined the aid activities. Local offices also distributed information on government aid programs being introduced. The content was informative, with a neutral emotional tinge. The websites of municipality, local and regional (to a much lesser extent) media, websites of entrepreneurs involved in the assistance were involved in publishing the content.

Think tanks on migration, depopulation and welcoming initiatives

“Prior to 2015 refugee policy has been carried out in the sphere of public ignorance and has not been an issue of public debate. In Poland this promoted the technocratic management and implementation of the EU policy. Stepping of the issue out of the shadows and the ensuing interest of public opinion resulted in the construction of exile as a social problem that calls for urgent policy making efforts. The dominant framing of its subject matter for the emergent Polish refugee policy has been security, while humanitarian concerns has been backgrounded” (Kubicki et al., 2017, p. 28). A similar discourse transformation was taking place among academic researchers, who after 2015 increasingly began to analyze migration in the category of a security threat and distinguish between “economic migrants” and genuine refugees (Horolets et al., 2020). At the same time, the attitude towards migration presented after 2015 was

not so black and white in practice. Despite the so-called refugee crisis, as well as, most importantly, the gaining of power by the right-wing, conservative and anti-refugee Law and Justice party, Poland was a country accepting a relatively large number of foreign workers. This involves a division between culturally and ethnically close foreigners and those more “foreign,” particularly from Arab countries (Górak-Sosnowska, Pachocka 2019a, 2019b; Thérová, 2022). The crisis that began in August 2021 on the Polish-Belarusian border was considered in terms of a security threat. After Russia’s attack on Ukraine in late February 2022, there was a complete change in attitude toward forced migrants, but only those arriving from Ukraine and being mostly Ukrainian citizens (the approach to asylum-seekers from Iraq or Syria crossing the border with Belarus has not changed). One can try to explain this situation by various factors, including the perception of Ukrainians as ethnically and culturally close/similar to Polish residents, and by historically rooted and conditioned dislike of Russia. It is also worth noting that although the topic of migration and, more broadly, the integration of foreigners in Poland has been gaining attention in recent years (see e.g., Sobczak-Szelc et al., 2021, 2022; Mołęda-Zdziech et al. 2021), there is a lack of publications that converge with the issues raised by the “Welcoming Spaces” project, i.e. the combination of the topic of migration with depopulation and shrinking regions. In an analysis of materials prepared by selected Polish think tanks vision of viewing migration from the perspective of state policy prevails: primarily as a threat, including in particular the portrayal of the humanitarian crisis on the Belarusian border, but also the debate related to the so-called migration and refugee management crisis of 2015. The exception here is the discussion on migration from Ukraine, which was more technocratic from the beginning and mainly concerned the labour market. However, here, too, the long-term perspective and the emphasis on the integration/co-habitation of migrants, and the topic of their permanent settlement, was missing.

Annex 1: Analysis of the strategy in the context of migration, depopulation and welcoming initiatives

STRATEGY	PERIOD	KEYWORDS						
		MIGRAC*	MIGRAN*	CUDZOZIEM*	WYLUDNIAN*	DEPOPULAC*	PRZYJAZN*	
MALOPOLSKA 2030" VOIVODSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	2021-2030	X	As part of the main directions of development policy in Area I of the strategy entitled. "Malopolska's inhabitants", the "Labour market" is indicated, and the following reference to immigrants appears in its description: 'In view of the shrinking labour resources, the socio-professional integration of immigrants and the effective management of the capital they bring in the form of knowledge and professional experience will also be important.' (p. 25)	As part of the main development policy directions in Area I of the strategy entitled. "Malopolska" is indicated "Education" and the following reference to immigrants appears in its description: <i>Measures to improve the quality of higher education will be aimed at: increasing the participation of Malopolska higher education institutions in international educational and research programmes and in the exchange of experience, modernising and expanding teaching infrastructure, and creating incentives to work at Malopolska higher education institutions (including those addressed to foreigners).</i> (s. 23). And further: <i>The aim is to provide infrastructure and an offer of classes adapted to the needs of persons requiring special organisation of learning and specific methods of work, including persons with disabilities. Integration of persons from minority groups and foreigners will also be part of the package of measures in this area.</i> (p. 23-24)	As part of the main development policy directions in area V of the strategy entitled "Territorially balanced development", "Support of cities" is indicated and the following reference to depopulation appears in their description: "Territorially balanced development" is indicated and the following reference to depopulation appears in their description: <i>Problems occurring in cities, such as their "sprawl", "shrinkage", "depopulation", "ageing" or those in the field of environmental protection deserve special attention. The response to the growing negative trends will be measures aimed at improving development opportunities, as well as encouraging municipalities to implement existing urban development concepts, adequate to the endogenous potentials and external factors influencing their development.</i> (p. 65)	Within the framework of the main directions of development policy in Strategy Area V "Territorially balanced development", "Support of cities" is indicated and the following reference to depopulation appears in their description: <i>In the development of medium-sized cities (poviat cities - supra-local centres of the first and second order), the main challenge will be to stop the progressive depopulation processes, including the outflow of inhabitants, mainly young people, to larger cities, which usually provide a better offer in terms of the labour market and opportunities to improve competences and qualifications.</i> (p. 65)	X	
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WOODS MALOPOLSKIEGO 2011-2020	2011-2020		The Diagnosis mentions migration (internal in Poland and internal in the region) as a problem of Malopolska (p. 10). In addition, attention is drawn to economic migration abroad as a problem related to the outflow of human capital from Malopolska (p. 26).	X	X	In the section Functional areas at voivodeship level, it is noted that the voivodeship identifies two parts: the central part, where growth dominated, and the depopulating periphery. (p. 48)	X	
LUBELSKIE VOIVODSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO 2030	2021-2030		In the "Introduction" under "1.4. Rationale and determinants of the Development Strategy of Lubelskie Voivodeship until 2030" it is noted that: <i>The regions of Poland and the entire European Union are facing new challenges, resulting from globalisation processes, unfavourable demographic processes, mass uncontrolled migration, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, or threats related to climate change.</i> " (p. 4)	In the "Synthesis of the Diagnosis", the EU policy orientations noted that "The new edition and proposed design of the Cohesion Policy implies maintaining investment in all regions, differentiating the intensity of support according to the regions' level of development. In addition to the size of GDP per capita, new criteria have been introduced in the method of fund allocation - youth unemployment, low education levels, climate change and measures related to the reception and integration of migrants." (p. 6)	Under "Strategic Objective 4 - Strengthening Social Capital", "Operational Objective 4.3 Social Inclusion and Integration" is set and within it, one of the "DIRECTIONS OF ACTION/INTERVENTION" is: <i>Integration and activation of marginalised communities, foreigners and re-emigrants</i> (p. 83)	X	In the description of the chapter "TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF THE SRWL 2030". Strategy in relation to the National Strategy for Regional Development, it has been noted that this document indicates the strategic objective 2 Strengthening of connections and functional systems	X

STRATEGY	PERIOD	KEYWORDS					
		MIGRAC*	MIGRAN*	CUDZOZIEM*	WYLUDNIAN*	DEPOPULAC*	PRZYJAZN*
		<p>Under "Strategic Objective 4 - Strengthening Social Capital", "Operational Objective 4.5 Public Safety" is set and within it, one of the "DIRECTIONS OF ACTION OF THE VOIVAL AUTHORITY" is: <i>Supporting actions to reduce the spread of infectious diseases resulting from internal and cross-border migration, strengthening infectious wards and prevention systems against infectious diseases</i> (p.86)</p> <p>In the description of the chapter "TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF THE SRWL 2030". Strategy in relation to the National Strategy for Regional Development, it has been noted that this document indicates "Strategic objective 2 Strengthening connections and functional systems" and the scope of intervention envisaged within it includes: increasing the attractiveness of migration and settlement through comprehensive actions encouraging people to live and settle in medium-sized cities (especially young and educated people), using, for example, housing instruments, and increasing the quality and scope of public services provided (p.91)</p>				<p>within which the scope of intervention is: <i>improvement of accessibility of public services, inter alia, through their development and ultimately integration of their provision and definition of local standards of their accessibility taking into account the aspect of depopulation and the process of aging of the population, supporting the process of deinstitutionalisation of social services, especially by including PES in their implementation</i> (p. 92)</p> <p>In the introduction to the "Indicators for monitoring the implementation of the strategy" in the chapter "Monitoring system of the strategy" in relation to depopulation it is stated that: <i>Some of the estimated, projected values for the selected indicators for 2030 assume a value lower than the initial values. This is due to demographic trends and the depopulation of Poland, and does not constitute a forecasting error. The exception is the level of the unemployment rate, whose value is estimated partly as a result of projected demographic changes and partly as a result of the implementation of the Strategy.</i> (p. 114)</p>	
2014-2020	LUBELSKIE VOIVODSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2014-2020 (with an outlook to 2030)	The "Strategy Assumptions" describing the "MACROECONOMIC SITUATION, DEVELOPMENT MODEL" state that: <i>The most important internal determinants are demographic processes (low birth rate, negative migration balance, increasing life expectancy) and the exhaustion of the previous simple development factors (unlocking of entrepreneurship, inflow of foreign capital and later of aid funds, low, but increasing, labour costs, resulting from the low, but increasing, wealth of the population).</i> (p.6)	X	X		In the section "Assumptions of the Strategy" an excerpt from the "Long term National Development Strategy "Third Wave of Modernity. Poland 2030": <i>At the same time, counteracting depopulation of less developed areas must be one of the priorities of development policy.</i> (p. 11)	X
Opolskie Voivodeship Development Strategy Opolskie 2030	2021-2030	The strategic challenge under " CHALLENGES IN THE SOCIETY DIMENSION" is "active residents" and within this one of the three "key specific challenges" is: <i>To pursue an active migration policy and promote the province through multiculturalism in response to changes in labour markets.</i> (p.12)	In the conclusions of the Diagnosis regarding the "Horizontal determinants of development", the following were identified as one of them: <i>multiculturalism - understood through the prism of the presence of national and ethnic minorities in Opolskie and the observed and anticipated growing number of immigrants, as well as cultural heritage and diversity</i> (p. 10)	The "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE CONTEXT INDICATORS" under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS - RESIDENTS READY TO CHALLENGE AND CREATE AN OPEN COMMUNITY" include: <i>number of insured foreigners in pension and disability insurance to total insured (natural persons) in pension and disability insurance</i> (p.69)	X	In the conclusions of the Diagnosis on 'Horizontal Development Determinants', <i>depopulation - the unfavourable demographic conditions of the region, manifested mainly by population decline and the ageing of the population, affect all areas of life, in particular the labour market, health and social policy. Therefore, pro-family and pro-seniority policy should be treated as a long-term, horizontal and unconventional influence in every sphere of human life (as a resident, student, parent, employee and senior citizen), undertaken so far within the</i>	X

STRATEGY	PERIOD	KEYWORDS					
		MIGRAC*	MIGRAN*	CUDZOZIEM*	WYLUDNIAN*	DEPOPULAC*	PRZYJAZN*
						<p>framework of a recognisable project such as Opole for the Family in recent years. (p. 10)</p>	
		<p>Among the "CHALLENGES RELATING TO EXTERNAL CONDITIONS" listed are: 4. take action to limit adverse demographic changes at the national level - it will be important to effectively implement solutions arising from European policies and government policies and programmes, in particular those aimed at supporting the functioning of seniors and families, including mother and child care, and supporting the potential of foreign economic immigration. (p. 21)</p>	<p>In the description of "Strategic objective 1: PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS - RESIDENTS READY TO CHALLENGE AND CREATING AN OPEN COMMUNITY" it is stated that: "A unique place in regional development policy is given to nurturing multicultural heritage and building a climate for intercultural and international integration, tolerance and openness towards different attitudes, views, people, including newcomers from abroad, and the inclusion of foreigners and re-emigrants in the socio-economic life of the region." (p. 33)</p>			<p>The conclusions of the Diagnosis on "SOCIO - KEY FEATURES OF THE VOIVODSHIP" recognise: The negative demographic processes observed in the long term, including in particular the phenomenon of depopulation (shaped significantly by the negative birth rate and to a lesser extent by the negative migration balance) and the ageing of the population, are still a current barrier and a threat to the current and future socio-economic development of the Opolskie Voivodeship. The problem of population decline affects municipalities located in the southern part of the voivodeship to the greatest extent. (p. 11)</p>	
		<p>In the "SWOT analysis - opportunities of the province" the following was mentioned: foreign economic immigration (p.25)</p>	<p>Under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: STRONG ECONOMY - INTELLIGENT ECONOMY STRENGTHENING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGION", one of the operational objectives is "SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL RELATIONS", and within it one of the lines of action is "development of a multicultural society" described as: support for activities aimed at openness and tolerance, development of multiculturalism, intercultural integration and regional identity; promotion and support for activities aimed at maintaining and developing the cultural and linguistic identity of national and ethnic minorities living in the region; promotion of the Silesian dialect; development of cultural education, support and integration of foreigners and re-emigrants." (p. 37)</p>				
		<p>In the "SWOT Analysis - Threats to the Province" the following was mentioned: lack of migration policy (p.25)</p>	<p>Under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: STRONG ECONOMY - INTELLIGENT ECONOMY ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGION", one of the operational objectives is "ELIGIBLE CITIZENS", and within them one of the directions of activities is "professional activation" described as: professionalisation of vocational counselling, including specialised counselling addressed to young people entering the labour market; measures to increase the chances on the labour market of those in need of support, such as: senior citizens, economically inactive, women, re-emigrants, foreigners, persons with disabilities, carers of persons in need of support in daily life. (p. 37)</p>			<p>In the conclusions of the Diagnosis concerning the "TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF THE STRATEGY" with regard to "AREAS OF STRATEGIC INTERVENTION" it was stated that some of the towns and gminas of Opolskie Voivodeship were included in two types of national OSI, including: "1. OSI Medium-sized cities losing socio-economic functions", at the description of which it was noted that: In the Opolskie Voivodeship the group of cities affected by the consequences of political and socio-economic transformation (deindustrialisation, shrinkage of the economic base, depopulation, and consequently washing out of functions) includes all cities with population over 20,000 (p. 48)</p>	
		<p>The description "SCENARIO OF "LIMITED PUBLIC RESOURCES" notes: "It will be necessary to rely on immigrant resources, which should be served, among other things, by supporting NGOs and business environment institutions." (p.31)</p>	<p>Under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: STRONG ECONOMY - INTELLIGENT ECONOMY ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGION", one of the operational objectives is "ECONOMY OPEN TO COOPERATION", and within it one of the directions of activities is "development of entrepreneurship" described as: "lifelong" education and training in entrepreneurship at every stage of education; support in setting up one's own business, including by re-emigrants and foreigners; development of the social economy; promotion of pro-business attitudes." (p. 40)</p>				

STRATEGY	PERIOD	KEYWORDS					
		MIGRAC*	MIGRAN*	CUDZOZIEM*	WYLUDNIAN*	DEPOPULAC*	PRZYJAZN*
Opolskie Voivodeship Development Strategy to 2020.	2012-2020	<p>Under "2. Social, economic and spatial determinants of voivodeship development" and in it "2.1. Synthesis of the socio-economic diagnosis" it was noted that: <i>"These issues have a direct bearing on the problem of natural growth, which, combined with a negative migration balance, consequently leads to a decline in the region's population, a situation that is very unfavourable for its further development, in both the social and economic spheres."</i> (p. 30)</p>	<p>Under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2. Active regional community", there is an "OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.2. Enriching the multicultural heritage and regional identity", which includes: <i>promoting and preserving the region's tangible and intangible multicultural heritage and the traditions of the various nationalities living in the Opolskie Voivodeship, including immigrants</i> (p. 102)</p>	X	<p>Under "2. Social, economic and spatial conditions of voivodeship development" and in it "2.1. Synthesis of socio-economic diagnosis" it was noted that: <i>"A much more intensive decrease in the population level of the Opolskie Voivodeship than of the entire Poland is to result, according to the forecast of the Central Statistical Office, primarily from the unfavourable balance of natural movement, and after 2020 only from this reason, as from this date the balance of foreign migration exchange is to be positive."</i> (p. 35)</p>	<p>Under "2. Social, economic and spatial determinants of voivodeship development" and in it "2.1. Synthesis of socio-economic diagnosis" it was noted that: <i>"The most important development challenge facing our region is therefore to prevent and counteract depopulation processes"</i> (p.7)</p>	<p>The letter from the region's authorities at the beginning of the Strategy states that: <i>"The implementation of the directions of development, which have been set out in the Strategy, is intended to achieve the vision of our region in 2020: (...) - a friendly living environment for families, entrepreneurs and all representatives of the socio-economic space"</i> (p. 7)</p>
		<p>Under "2. Social, economic and spatial determinants of voivodeship development" and in it "2.1. Synthesis of socio-economic diagnosis" it was noted that: <i>"The phenomenon of depopulation had different intensity in individual regions, but it was most unfavourable in the Opolskie Voivodeship. (...) Depopulation processes did not proceed evenly within the Opolskie Voivodeship (p. 28) And further: The projected depopulation trend will therefore not differ from the situation we have experienced in recent years."</i> (p. 35)</p>			<p>Under "2. Social, economic and spatial determinants of voivodeship development" and in it "2.1. Synthesis of socio-economic diagnosis" it was noted that: <i>"The phenomenon of depopulation had different intensity in individual regions, but it was most unfavourable in the Opolskie Voivodeship. (...) Depopulation processes did not proceed evenly within the Opolskie Voivodeship (p. 28) And further: The projected depopulation trend will therefore not differ from the situation we have experienced in recent years."</i> (p. 35)</p>		
		<p>In the SWOT analysis for the Opolskie Voivodeship, the first of the weaknesses is <i>depopulation and the age structure of the population</i> (Table 10, p. 80).</p>			<p>Under "2. Social, economic and spatial determinants of voivodeship development" and in it "2.1. Synthesis of socio-economic diagnosis" it was noted that: <i>"The problem areas included: - depopulation area (the whole voivodeship with particular attention to the Opolskie sub-region within the postulated NUTS3)"</i> (p. 72)</p>		
					<p>Instruments for Strategy Implementation" includes "Voivodeship development programmes", stating that: <i>It is assumed that the most important programme will be the Programme of the Special Demographic Zone in the Opolskie Voivodeship postulating the inclusion of the region in a special set of measures to counteract further depopulation</i> (p. 144)</p>	<p>Under the description of "Development Challenges", it was recognised that: <i>The most important horizontal development challenge is Preventing and counteracting depopulation processes. It is a response to the unfavourable demographic situation of the region, recognised as the most important development barrier. Opolskie Voivodeship is a region, which is systematically losing its population capital, which is mainly influenced by: the tradition of foreign migration, including economic migration and low birth rate"</i> (p. 89).</p> <p>Within the framework of the description "THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE - Labour market-ready active society" it was stated that: <i>"Therefore, it is necessary to effectively counteract the depopulation of the region by taking comprehensive and</i></p>	

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						effective measures aimed at gradual, consistent reconstruction and strengthening of human capital and increasing its activity in the labour market.' (p. 91)		
Voivodship development strategy - Podkarpackie 2030	2020-2030	In "2. Diagnosis of the socio-economic situation of Podkarpackie voivodship" in the section on "TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE" it is noted that: <i>Therefore, it is strategically expedient to look for market segments on which the Jasionka port can be based in the perspective of 2030 and beyond. Such segments could be: servicing immigration traffic to Poland (connections with Ukraine), transport of passengers to intercontinental hubs (including CPK, large transfer airports in Western Europe), servicing Ukrainian traffic from border areas (access to the airport by land transport) on relations to Western Europe and further (e.g. to Canada), servicing cargo traffic, parallel servicing of general aviation traffic, i.e. private and commercial air traffic.</i> (p.41)	In the "Strategic Diagnosis" in the "1. Diagnosis of the environment factors of Podkarpackie voivodship" in the section entitled: "Significant changes in the EU are a challenge for Poland as a whole" states that: <i>Armed conflicts and political tensions taking place on the periphery of the EU are generating streams of refugees and migrants.</i> ' (p. 12) Within the Strategy's thematic area "2. HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL" and the objective "Strengthening human and social capital as a basis for the development of the region and raising the living standards of its inhabitants", priority "2.6. Social inclusion" was set out, and within it the line of action "2.6.6. Regional Immigration Policy", in the description of which it was noted that: <i>The conditions of the EU common market, as well as the development of the economy, result in an influx of people to the region from both the EU and third countries, mainly from Ukraine. Immigration policy should be multi-directional and support immigrants so that they strengthen the region's potential, e.g. through changes to make it easier to employ them and for them to set up businesses, which will affect the competitiveness of the economy. At the same time, immigration policy must be rational and must not restrict employment for Polish citizens. Regional immigration policy should also take into account the adaptation of foreigners to regional conditions and the building of appropriate social relations.</i> (p. 90) The assumed measures are: <i>taking integration measures with regard to foreigners and their families applying for permanent residence permits or residing in the region; supporting the offer of schools in terms of preparing them to function independently in the conditions of a democratic society and the traditions of the region; establishing schools with an international standard of education in the region; strengthening the effectiveness of visa policy instruments to counteract illegal immigration; strengthening cooperation between institutions and services responsible for the implementation of tasks in the area of immigration policy; undertaking control activities in the area of legality of employment of foreigners; making it easier for citizens of non-EU countries to set up businesses; streamlining proceedings conducted with regard to foreigners with preferred qualifications as regards the legality of their stay and employment; strengthening the staff of bodies handling foreigners' cases.</i> (p. 91)	X	X	X	X	
PODKARPACKIE VOIVODSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2007-2020	2007-2020	X	X	X	X	X	X	
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE MAZOWIECKIE VOIVODESHIP 2030+	2022-2030+	X	X		X	X	X	
Development Strategy of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship up to 2030 Innovative Mazovia	2013-2030	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Pomorskie Voivodeship Development Strategy 2030	2021-2030	IN "I. GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND CONCLUSIONS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION OF POMORSKIE VOIVODSHIP" under "1. Climate crisis and environmental degradation" it is stated that: <i>Climate change and the associated lower yields, can cause conflicts over resources, and these in turn force residents to migrate. While the influx of refugees or migrants, arriving in areas free of tensions, increases the risk of further conflict, often due to misunderstandings resulting from cultural differences, it is very important to ensure a sense of social security and bridge divides, inter alia by guaranteeing equal rights and protection from discrimination.</i> (p. 8-9)	Within the "Conclusions of the analysis of the socio-economic situation of Pomorskie Voivodeship" under "2. Open regional community b) Social vulnerability" it is stated that: <i>An important challenge is the integration of immigrants into the local community. The increasing influx of immigrants, mainly from the Ukraine and Belarus, which has become apparent in recent years, should not be considered solely from the point of view of the Pomeranian labour market. It is important to pursue an active, inclusive and appropriate integration policy that facilitates the employment of foreigners, helps them to build good relations and bonds with the residents of Pomerania and encourages them to live permanently or for longer in the region.</i> (p. 31)		The "optimistic" scenario described in "II. SCENARIUS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POMORSKIE VOIVODSHIP TO 2030" provides that: <i>Incoming new residents (including foreigners) feed the economy and integrate well into the Pomeranian community. Favourable living conditions stimulate an increase in the fertility rate which, combined with a positive migration balance, improves the demographic situation of the voivodeship.</i> (p.62)	X	X	In the "Rationale for the Objective" "Strategic Objective 2: OPEN REGIONAL COMMUNITY" it is noted: <i>It is also planned to increase the provision and accessibility of social services for all residents, especially those at risk of poverty or social exclusion, primarily seniors, children and young people, people</i>

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		<p>Within the "Conclusions of the analysis of the socio-economic situation of Pomorskie Voivodeship", under "3. Resilient economy b) Labour market", it is stated that: <i>'The dynamic development of the economy, including new jobs, necessitates the need to attract workers from foreign markets [194] and to define a migration policy, as well as the need for intelligent activation of untapped labour resources, especially women and seniors, as well as people with disabilities.'</i> (p.42) [194] Pomerania has become an attractive place to work and live for labour migrants (mainly from Ukraine) in recent years. In 2019, poviats labour offices entered 128.8 thousand employers' declarations on commissioning work to citizens of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Georgia and Ukraine without the need to obtain a work permit (in 2020 there were 126.0 thousand) and issued 2.1 thousand seasonal work permits to foreigners (in 2020 - 2.0 thousand). On the other hand, the Pomeranian Voivode issued 30.4 thousand long-term work permits (in 2020 - 23.4 thousand).</p>	<p>"Neutral" scenario described in "II. SCENARIUSZ DLA ROZWOJU POMORSKIEGO VOJEWODZSTWA DO 2030" predicts that: <i>'Due to a lack of governmental support and poor cooperation on the part of local and regional institutions, the problem of integration of immigrants is growing.'</i> (s. 64). Whereas in the "Pessimistic" scenario: <i>'The region is gradually losing its importance on the economic map of Poland and Europe. Pomorskie is no longer an attractive place - for residents, migrants, tourists and investors.'</i> (p.66)</p>				<p>with disabilities, women and immigrants.' (p.88) And the 'desired direction of change' of this objective includes: <i>'Provide welcoming public spaces for the development of social capital.'</i> (p.89)</p>
		<p>In the "SWOT Analysis", immigration was included under "Opportunities" (p.58)</p>	<p>One of the "V. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY" "8 Principle of Social Cohesion" means, inter alia: <i>'As a result, projects included in the implementation of the Strategy will be verified using the criterion of equal treatment and the criterion of accessibility for persons with special needs (including, above all, persons in need of support in daily functioning and their carers, seniors, persons with disabilities, women, children and young people and immigrants).'</i> (p.70) In contrast, the "10. Principle of a labour market responsive to the needs of the economy and employment growth" states, inter alia, that: <i>'In addition, the labour market measures implemented should be comprehensive and tailored to the needs of specific groups (especially young people, women, seniors, persons with disabilities and immigrants).'</i> (p.71)</p>				
		<p>Under "Operational Objective 3.2. LABOUR MARKET", "Expectations towards central authorities" included: <i>'Develop national migration policies that respond to the needs of employers and regional economies, and introduce improvements in procedures for the legalisation of residence and employment of foreigners.'</i> (p.108)</p>	<p>In the "Rationale for the Objective" "Strategic Objective 2: OPEN REGIONAL COMMUNITY" it is noted: <i>'It is also planned to increase the provision and accessibility of social services for all residents, especially those at risk of poverty or social exclusion, primarily seniors, children and young people, people with disabilities, women and immigrants.'</i> (p.88) And the 'desired direction of change' of this objective includes: <i>'An increase in the level of integration and openness towards immigrants'</i> (p.89)</p>				
		<p>IN "IX. AREAS OF INTERREGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION" with regard to "International dimension (Baltic, European and global)" it is stated that: <i>'In the area of migration policy, civil society or the protection of the Vistula Lagoon, it will be important to continue relations, mainly with countries across the eastern border.'</i> (p.125)</p>	<p>In the "Rationale for the Objective" "Operational Objective 2.2. SOCIAL INTEGRITY" it is noted: <i>'The systemic integration of immigrants is also an important task. Economic, cultural-social, legal-institutional, identity and spatial integration measures need to be taken, which should lead to the provision of rights, opportunities and services to immigrants that are available to all residents of the province.'</i> (p.93) And the "thematic focus" of this objective includes: <i>'Effective and sustainable integration of immigrants, including through actions in the areas of education, culture, health and social assistance.'</i> (p.94) The province's own "Commitments" included: <i>'Coordination of the integration process of immigrants in the region. And the "Expectations towards the central authorities" in relation to this Objective are: Systemic support of immigrants by strengthening the competences of the provincial governments in the areas of labour market, social assistance and integration, health care and education.'</i> (p.95)</p> <p>Under "VIII. TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF THE STRATEGY" the "Key Interventions" include: <i>'effective and sustainable integration of immigrants, including through actions in the fields of education, culture, health and social assistance'</i> (Operational Objective 2.2.) (p.117)</p>				
Pomorskie Voivodeship Development Strategy 2020	2012-2020	<p>IN "C. GLOBAL TRENDS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POMORSKIE VOJEWODZSTWO" includes: <i>'6. ageing populations in developed countries and high population growth rates in developing countries, with increasing migration flows. In contrast, "EUROPEAN (including Baltic) trends and determinants" included: 6. not fully controlled migration processes from outside the EU, as well as increasing suburbanisation and depopulation of the centres of large cities.'</i> (p. 8)</p>	X	X	X	X	X

STRATEGY	PERIOD	KEYWORDS						
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Development Strategy of Greater Poland Voivodeship until 2030	2020-2030	The 'Introduction' notes that: <i>'The shortage of working population is prompting a deliberate migration policy.'</i> (p.8)	In chapter "3. Paradigm for the development of Wielkopolska", under "3.1. Vision", "Wielkopolska open to new ideas and people" was identified as one of the elements of the vision, which was described as: <i>'Open to migrants, enriching the cultural heritage, strengthening the education and labour markets of Wielkopolska's cities and rural areas.'</i> (p. 48)	Under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF WIELKOPOLSKIE BASED ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF ITS RESIDENTS" and within it "OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1.3. Increase and improve the use of human capital in the labour market", the "PACKAGE OF ACTIONS" includes the "Wielkopolska labour market", whose description notes that: <i>'In relation to the need to meet the needs of the labour market, measures for foreigners are also important, including the education of employers employing foreigners on the culture of the workers' country of origin.'</i> (p.62)	X	In chapter "2. State and challenges of the development of Wielkopolska" in section "2.1. Diagnosis of the socio-economic situation and development challenges" to "Challenges for Wielkopolska" was included "Challenge 2. Developing and effective use of human capital" and in its description it was noted that: <i>The region ranks 3rd in comparison with other voivodeships in terms of the number of declarations on the intention to entrust work to foreigners registered by poviats labour offices.</i> (p.19) And further: <i>In many regions of the European Union, population growth is increasingly determined by migration. In Wielkopolska, natural increase still plays an important role.</i> (p.22) And further: <i>In 2017, district labour offices in Wielkopolska registered 182,194 declarations on the intention to employ foreigners (approximately 10.0% of all declarations submitted in Poland), of which 68.1% concerned men and 31.9% women. Most of such declarations included citizens of Ukraine (172,424 declarations - 94.6%), Belarus (4,620 - 2.5%) and Moldova (2,948 - 1.6%).</i> (p.22)	In chapter "2. State and challenges of the development of Wielkopolska" in section "2.1. Diagnosis of the socio-economic situation and development challenges", "Challenge 3. Counteracting the negative effects of demographic processes" was included in "Challenges for Wielkopolska" and its description states that: <i>The inhabitants of the voivodeship constitute almost 1/10 of the country's population (9.1% in 2018). The population of Wielkopolska is steadily growing, which positively distinguishes the region against the background of Central and Eastern Europe struggling with depopulation</i> (p. 22)	For the "Konin Functional Area" the "KEY ACTION DIRECTIVES" under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF WIELKOPOLSKIE BASED ON THE REGION'S MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL RESOURCES" include: <i>development of services increasing the attractiveness of settlement in KOF and creation of friendly space</i> (p.94)
		In chapter "2. Status and challenges of development of Greater Poland" in section "2.1. Diagnosis of socio-economic situation and development challenges", "Challenge 3. Counteracting negative effects of demographic processes" was included in "Challenges for Greater Poland" and in its description it was stated that: <i>In the context of the projected population decline, it is also necessary to conduct an active, comprehensive and coordinated pro-natalist and pro-family policy and migration policy. The challenge is to maintain social cohesion. Intra-regional demographic changes - especially those caused by migration - affect local labour markets (e.g. the phenomenon of human capital leaching out), the social structure of the population and the related structure of the local economy.</i> (p. 24)						

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		<p>In the part "2.2. Strengths and weaknesses of the voivodship, opportunities and threats in its surroundings" the "OPPORTUNITIES FOR WIELKOPOLSKI" include: <i>Labour migration to Poland, mainly from the eastern direction while "DANGERS FOR WIELKOPOLSKI" include: Lack of effective and sufficient legal solutions for migration policy in Europe and Poland (p. 42)</i></p>	<p>For the "Poznań Metropolitan Area" the "KEY ACTION DIRECTIVES" under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF WIELKOPOLSKIE BASED ON THE REGION'S MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL RESOURCES" include: <i>policies for the integration of foreigners into the local community, including the promotion of (p. 89)</i></p>			<p>2020. The development of the region, as well as the living conditions of its inhabitants, are influenced by global trends such as globalisation supporting the development of technology and digitisation, depopulation and ageing of European societies, increasing spatial mobility, growing environmental awareness, pressure for flexibility and an integrated approach in management. These trends are not new, but their impact is becoming increasingly felt by local governments and their residents. The negative effects of global trends highlight the importance of offering a high quality of life to the region's current and future inhabitants. Wielkopolska must offer some of the best living conditions for every resident, regardless of age, gender or other socio-cultural categories, opportunities to do business while respecting the environment and cultural heritage of the region. (p. 47)</p>	
		<p>Under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF WIELKOPOLSKIE OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON THE REGION'S MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL RESOURCES" and in it "OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.1. Demographically conscious development of Wielkopolska" It is stated that: <i>The Self-Government of the Voivodeship will support measures to create the best possible environment for settlement for people seeking a place to live and work in Wielkopolska, while bearing in mind the territorial dimension of support. Furthermore, it will pursue an active migration policy oriented towards meeting the needs of the labour market and maintaining the population potential of the region. The integration of foreigners and their families in Wielkopolska will take place, inter alia, through housing and education policies, including education of employers employing foreigners on the culture of the workers' country of origin and multicultural and intercultural education integrating migrants into the local community. (p.65)</i></p> <p>Under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF WIELKOPOLSKIE OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON THE REGION'S MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL RESOURCES" and in it "OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.2. Counteracting marginalisation and exclusion" it is stated that: <i>The Self-Government of the Voivodeship will support the levelling of educational opportunities, which means creating conditions so that every person in Wielkopolska can realise their educational aspirations and achieve their important life goals. So that every person with a migration experience feels safe and a full member of society. And further: in the context of the observed migration movements, it will also be crucial to develop the sector of non-governmental organisations working on behalf of foreigners and run by migrants. (p.66)</i></p>				<p>Under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2. SOCIALLY DEVELOPING WIELKOPOLSKIE OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON THE REGION'S MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL RESOURCES" and in it "OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2.1. Demographically conscious development of Wielkopolska" it is stated that: <i>The problem of depopulation in Wielkopolska is, on the one hand, a projected decline in population in the entire region, on the other hand, the phenomenon of depopulation already visible today especially in areas distant from major urban centres. What draws attention in the migration movement is the dynamic population growth around the largest urban centres. Local governments, both experiencing depopulation and population growth as a result of suburbanisation, are struggling with problems of organisation and access to public services, settlement policy problems, of which spatial and housing management are important. (p.65)</i></p>	
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE WIELKOPOLSKIE VOIVODSHIP UNTIL 2020	2005-2020	<p>In section "VI Assessment of the internal potential of the voivodeship" and there in "2. Problems of the main strategic areas" in relation to "2.4. Inhabitants" it is noted that: <i>In addition, a slight increase in external migration due to the opening of labour markets in the European Union should be expected. (p.34)</i></p>	X	X	X	X	X

STRATEGY	PERIOD	KEYWORDS					
		MIGRAC*	MIGRAN*	CUDZOZIEM*	WYLUDNIAN*	DEPOPULAC*	PRZYJAZN*
LUBUSKIE VOIVODSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2030	2021-2030	In "2. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIAGNOSE OF LUBUSKIE VOIVODSHIP - DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES" in the section on "2.1. Social sphere" it is noted that: <i>The pessimistic demographic forecast of the voivodeship - the ageing of the regional community - is not significantly different from the nationwide demographic processes and should prompt the national authorities to pursue an active immigration policy and the voivodeship authorities to increase the attractiveness of the region for immigrants in the current state of the law.</i> (p.7) Thus, as noted further on, "Challenge 1. Counteracting unfavourable demographic trends" includes: <i>an effective immigration policy.</i> (p. 8). In turn, "Challenge 2. High quality public services and social inclusion" is, inter alia: <i>social integration of excluded people and immigrants</i> (p.9)	In "2. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIAGNOSIS OF LUBUSKIE VOIVODSHIP - DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES" in the section on "2.2. Economic sphere" it is noted that: <i>There is also a need for incentives for immigrants who work in deficit occupations to stay. The challenge is to create attractive, well-paid jobs.</i> (p.10) Thus, as noted further on, "Challenge 1. Tackling unfavourable demographic trends" includes: <i>an effective immigration policy.</i> (p. 8). In turn, "Challenge 2. High quality public services and social inclusion" is, inter alia: <i>social integration of excluded people and immigrants</i> (p.10)	Under "Strategic objective 4. An attractive region, effectively managed and open to cooperation", "Operational objective 4.3: High efficiency of public administration and regional institutions and cooperation for the development of the region" is defined, which as one of the "Lines of intervention (actions)" assumes: <i>Supporting the creation of assistance and information systems for foreigners.</i> (p.43)	X	X	In "2. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIAGNOSE OF THE LUBUSKIE VOIVODSHIP - DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES", in the part concerning "2.4. Sphere of management of the region's development", "Challenge 10. Active cooperation in the national and international forum" was defined, understood, among others, as: <i>promotion in the national and international forum, strengthening the image of the voivodeship which is open and friendly both for tourists and potential new residents</i> (p.20)
LUBUSKIE VOIVODSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2020	2012-2020	Under "Strategic objective 3: Social and territorial cohesion of the region", "Operational objective 3.4: Promotion of professional and social inclusion" is defined and the "Lines of intervention" provided for under it include: <i>Taking effective action on immigration policy</i> (p.48)	In the framework of "Strategic goal 4. An effectively managed region", "Operational goal 4.1. Creating an attractive image of the voivodeship and the promotion of the Lubuskie brand" was set, and in its description it was noted that: <i>In the process of competing for investors, tourists and migrants, the image of the voivodeship and its external recognition will become increasingly important.</i> (p.50)	X	X	X	X
THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE SILESIA VOIVODSHIP "SILESIA 2030" GREEN SŁĄSKIE	2020-2030	In the "2. STRATEGIC DIAGNOZE" under the section on "POPULATION" entitled "DEMOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL PROCESSES" it is noted that: <i>The decline in the population is due to both the persistent negative birth rate and the very large migration outflow of the population. (...) However, it should be stressed that this phenomenon is accompanied in parallel by a strong immigration trend related to the influx of workers from Eastern Europe, in particular from Ukraine.</i> (p.13) In "2. STRATEGIC DIAGNOZE", the "MAIN CHALLENGES" include: <i>Counteracting negative depopulation trends associated with both negative birth rates and negative migration balances</i> (p.26) In the "SWOT ANALYSIS" the "WEAKNESSES" included: <i>Negative demographics including: negative migration balance, ageing population.</i> (p.86), while "OPPORTUNITIES" include: <i>Responsible migration policy, and as "DANGERS": Crisis in the European integration process (migration crisis, Eurozone, Brexit).</i> (p.88) In "4. PROGRESSES AND TRENDS SHAPING THE REGION'S DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES", the most important forecasts in the "SOCIAL" area include: <i>Changes in the labour market, as a result of the replacement of the human labour factor by robotisation and automation solutions, on the other hand, the decline in labour supply in OECD countries, will increase pressure for far-reaching automation in the main industrial and service industries and the need for increased immigration from relatively younger regions (e.g. South Asia or Africa).</i> (p.114) In "4. PROGRESSES AND TRENDS SHAPING THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE REGION", the "PROGRESSES THAT WILL INFLUENCE THE WHOLE PROGRESS OF THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY (HORIZONTAL)" include: <i>Worsening migration flows - increased influx of migrants due to climate change and worsening armed conflicts on the periphery of the EU and increasing migration from Eastern European countries.</i> (p.115) And further: <i>the growing importance of European cohesion policy, sustainable agriculture and EU action in the areas of migration, security, defence.</i> (p.116)	Under "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE B. The Silesian Voivodeship as a resident-friendly region" formulates "Operational objective: B.1. High quality of social services, including health services", which includes: <i>Integration of immigrants through their inclusion in social and professional life and creating bonds within local communities.</i> (p.122)	X	X	X	
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE SILESIA VOIVODSHIP "SILESIA 2020+"	2013-2020+	In "1. Strategic Diagnosis" with regard to "Social Dimension" and "Demography" it was stated that: <i>The region is characterised by a negative rate of both interprovincial and foreign migration. (...) Foreign emigration is determined by economic factors and the lack of an immigration policy on a regional as well as a national scale.</i> (p. 13)	X	X	X	X	X

STRATEGY	PERIOD	KEYWORDS					
		MIGRAC*	MIGRAN*	CUDZOZIEM*	WYLUDNIAN*	DEPOPULAC*	PRZYJAZN*
		<p>In "2. Forecasts and trends shaping the region's development processes" with regard to "a) social change" the following was identified: <i>an upward trend in the scale of immigration, but still at a relatively low level</i> (p.39)</p> <p>Under "Priority area: (D) RELATIONS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT", there is a "Strategic objective: The Silesian Voivodeship is an open region that is an important partner for Europe's development" and one of the "Impact indicators - achieving the strategic objective" is: <i>Balance of foreign migration for permanent residence</i> (p.102)</p> <p>Under "Priority area: (D) RELATIONS WITH THE ENVIRONMENT", the "Strategic goal: The Silesian Voivodeship as an open region that is an important partner for Europe's development" was set, and within it the "Operational goal: D.2. An attractive image of the Silesian Voivodeship", whose "Result indicators - achieving the operational goal" is: <i>Balance of internal and foreign migration for permanent residence per 1,000 inhabitants</i> (p.105)</p>					
Development Strategy for the Lower Silesian Voivodeship 2030	2018-2030	Internal migration only	X	<p>In the SWOT analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the social sphere, the <i>lack of systemic solutions for the integration of foreigners</i> was identified as a weakness (p. 42), - in the economic sphere as a strength <i>the increasing share of foreigners in the labour market structure</i> (p. 43). <p>The strategic objective 'Strengthening regional human and social capital' includes the undertaking 'Supporting measures for the integration of foreigners' (p. 52).</p>	X	<p>In the SWOT analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the social sphere, <i>increasing depopulation</i> was identified as a weakness (p. 42). One of the three scenarios for the development of the voivodeship, 'Dynamic Evenness', assumes a reduction in the scale of depopulation (p. 47). 	X
Development Strategy for the Lower Silesian Voivodeship 2020	2013-2020	Internal migration, including circular migration, migration as an outflow of human capital from the region.	X	X	<p>In the SWOT analysis - weakness - <i>Rural depopulation in the region's peripheral areas</i> (p. 16).</p> <p>- Threat - <i>Depopulation of certain centres in the settlement pattern</i> (p. 16)</p>	<p>Part of the Strategy "Areas of Integration"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The Sudetenland Integration Area - covers the southern area of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship and is characterised by a number of development barriers, resulting, inter alia, from depopulation, high unemployment and difficult conditions for pro-development and infrastructural investments (specific nature of mountain and foothill areas, valuable natural areas, including those protected by law).</i> - <i>Western Integration Area A major threat to this area is also the increasing depopulation and the rise in unemployment associated with the depletion of lignite deposits.</i> (p. 30) 	X
Strategy for the Development of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship until 2030 - Acceleration Strategy 2030+	2020-2030	In the section "Synthetic characterisation of the development challenges of the voivodeship" - migration movements affect the decline in the population of the voivodeship (p. 13)	<p>Main objective: 2. a healthy, active and prosperous society. It assumes that the integration of migrants is beneficial and necessary also for demographic reasons, but it must be carried out properly, which requires extensive preparation of public institutions (administration, culture, labour offices, education, security and social assistance) for contact with the foreign interest, among the of which non-EU migrants are considered to have special needs. Immigrants need systemic support in the field of social integration (Polish language courses, nostrification of documents, support in the labour market including support for employers in employing foreigners). This support is also important in terms of treating foreigners as clients of public institutions - which is related to preparing the staff of these institutions for contacts with foreign clients (e.g. trainings on intercultural competences, cooperation with leaders of migrant communities and NGOs familiar with the needs of this group). Until foreigners with plans for permanent residence in the voivodeship acquire language competences, it is also important to prepare them to function in society and use the infrastructure. So far, local NGOs have also been the community undertaking activities for the benefit of broadly understood integration of foreigners into the Polish society in the region, and it is recommended to continue cooperation in this area. Incentives should be created for local self-government units, entrepreneurs and NGOs for permanent settlement and social integration of foreigners, especially families. A group particularly encouraged to settle in the voivodeship should be persons of Polish origin, especially from Russia, Ukraine, Central Asian countries, as well as persons returning to Poland from economic migration. (p. 154-155)</p>	<p>Trends observed in the region</p> <p>After 2014, the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship saw a significant increase in the number of foreigners on the labour market (p. 15)</p> <p>Description for main objective 2 A healthy, active and prosperous society.</p> <p>The needs for social integration of foreigners will also increase in the coming years. Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship, as one of four voivodeships in Poland, has on its territory a centre for foreigners where persons seeking international protection live (centre in Grupa near Grudziądz, Dragocznica municipality). This centre permanently houses between 100 and 120 persons, most of whom come from the Caucasus. (p. 151)</p> <p>The action direction "Social integration of foreigners" concerns all activities aimed at acquiring by foreigners residing in the voivodeship, the skills necessary for cultural integration. It refers to training and educational activities beyond the actions of the government administration towards immigrants and aims to accelerate the integration process. (p. 158)</p> <p>Action line "Integration of foreigners in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie labour market" The project is aimed at non-EU foreigners residing in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeship. The project aims to improve accessibility to the labour market, public institutions, as well as to improve the knowledge of the Polish language, translation and interpreting (oral and written into Polish), familiarisation with the rights and obligations arising from the Polish legal order and to show possibilities of using cultural institutions (p. 208)</p>	X	<p>"The voivodeship's transport system" The focus on the implementation of efficient public transport is also due to its perception as an essential tool for positively influencing and preventing the phenomena of marginalisation and depopulation of peripheral areas and counteracting the phenomenon of smaller urban centres losing their socio-economic functions (p. 118 and further on p. 163).</p>	X

STRATEGY	PERIOD	KEYWORDS					
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Strategy for the Development of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Region up to 2020 - Modernisation Plan 2020+	2013-2020	Migration in the context of internal or labour migration	X	Indicators describing aspects of social development: - Number of foreign students - Percentage of foreigners studying at universities in the voivodship in the total number of foreign students in Poland (p. 104)	Strategic goal: "Efficient management" Family Support Programme - this will be an instrument to prevent young people from emigrating outside the region, also an instrument to attract young people from other regions to the largest cities of the voivodeship, and thus also an instrument to mitigate the effects of depopulation of the largest cities and the forecast rapid ageing of their populations (p. 59-60)	Strategic intervention Area: "Employment growth" - one of the identification factors is depopulation in rural areas (p. 118)	X
Łódzkie Region Development Strategy 2030	2021-2030	Internal migration and the impact of migration on the situation of cities in the region.	X		Challenge: "Population ageing and progressive depopulation" Since 2010, the province's population has decreased by 97,800 people (3.8%) and the depopulation rate is one of the highest in the country. (p. 26-27)	Challenge: "Ageing population and increasing depopulation". The strategy is to counter depopulation.	X
Łódzkie Region Development Strategy 2020	2013-2020	Internal migration, migration balances.	Immigrants are mentioned as one of the groups that is at risk of social exclusion (p. 130)	X	The depopulation process in the voivodship as one of the key development problems (p. 26, 46)	In the diagnosis and development trends, depopulation as the main negative process (p. 26, 70)	X
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WOODS PODLASKIE 2030	2021-2030	Development potentials Economic immigration (mainly from Belarus and Ukraine) (p. 40) Development challenges Effective use of economic immigration to stimulate entrepreneurship at local level (p. 40) Operational objective: "Hospitable region", intervention direction: Raise awareness among the region's residents of the role of immigration in socio-economic development (p. 67)	Conditionality of the European Union: Armed conflicts and political tensions taking place close to EU borders generate streams of refugees and migrants. (p. 15)	Strategic objective 2: "Resourceful residents" - strategic diagnosis element Number of foreigners with valid documents entitling them to residency has been growing steadily since 2017, which can strengthen human capital in the region. (p. 45)	European Union conditionality: Pressure from the richer countries, regions and cities to siphon off valuable human potential from less prosperous EU Member States and regions, including Poland and from the podlaskie voivodship. (p. 16)	The strategy refers to depopulation as a major negative development trend.	X
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WOODS PODLASKIE 2020	2006-2020	SWOT analysis - weakness adverse demographic trends, including excessive emigration of the population (p. 25)	X	X	Objective 5 "Development of tourism using natural and cultural heritage assets". The depopulation of areas of the so-called "eastern wall" with its nationally unique wooden buildings and cultural landscape, is causing the destruction of historic buildings as well as entire village layouts. (p. 38)	The strengths of the voivodeship: The national and religious diversity of the population of Podlaskie is an extremely important element of the region's culture, its asset and strength, which should be protected and supported. Activities carried out in this area, such as competitions, festivals, reviews, publications, conferences, etc., contribute to mutual knowledge and understanding, teach attitudes of tolerance and friendly coexistence between nations. They also create good conditions for the development of cooperation and cultural exchange with foreign countries, especially Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine. (p. 29)	
Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Development Strategy 2030+	2021-2030	Framing migration as a demographic problem, internal migration, migration balances	X	X	Depopulation as part of the designation of strategic intervention areas (p. 62)	Depopulation as a development problem and an element in the designation of strategic intervention areas (p. 17, 46, 62)	X
Świętokrzyskie Regional Development Strategy to 2020	2006-2020	SWOT analysis - Weaknesses: a decline in the birth rate and strong migration as unfavourable demographic trends (p. 29); a high discrepancy between the high population density of the rural areas in the southern part of the voivodship and the low potential for population migration to the cities of the area (p. 30). - risks: combination of unfavourable trends demographic trends related to ageing society with a negative migration balance and economically driven outflow of people young people outside the region (p. 30)	X	X	X	X	X
Warmińsko-Mazurskie 2030. Strategy of social and economic development	2021-2030	Migration as one of the problems: Warmińsko-Mazurskie, like most voivodeships in Poland, is subject to unfavourable demographic and migration processes. (p. 4)	SWOT analysis - Opportunity: ...increased interest from external companies in the high-tech sector, increased importance of quality of life in the choices of entrepreneurs and migrants resulting in an appreciation of the region's characteristics (p. 24)	X	Depopulation as part of the designation of strategic intervention areas (p. 56)	Depopulation an element in the designation of strategic intervention areas (p. 56)	X

STRATEGY	PERIOD	KEYWORDS					
		MIGRAC*	MIGRAN*	CUDZOZIEM*	WYLUDNIAN*	DEPOPULAC*	PRZYJAZN*
			Operational objective: "Satisfying work" <i>High-quality jobs that are competitive in terms of pay as well as providing a basis for optimism about the future of each employee combined with quality of life should encourage not only current residents of the region but also domestic and foreign immigrants to realise their life ambitions.</i> (p. 35)				
Strategy for the socio-economic development of the voivodship warmińsko-mazurskie until 2025	2013-2025	The diagnosis highlights internal migration. Areas of strategic intervention: a synthesis: Loss of population potential - mainly due to migration.	SWOT analysis: - Opportunities <i>Increasing importance of quality of life in the choices of businesses and migrants resulting in an appreciation of what Warmia and Mazury has to offer</i> (p. 40)	X		Diagnosis: <i>Several municipalities of the warmińsko-mazurskie voivodeship are located among the most depopulated areas in the country (Banie Mazurskie, Budry, Bisztynek, Pieniężno and Ryn).</i> (p. 21)	X
Development Strategy of the Western Pomeranian Voivodeship until 2030	2021-2030	The diagnosis emphasises that migration processes are a development problem. Optimistic scenario: <i>Positive changes in the region's economic structure and education system will lead to a significant reduction in the level of unemployment and curb negative developments migration processes and population decline provinces.</i> (p. 33)	Forecast of development trends: <i>Migration an influx of economic migrants to West Pomerania from the East and South will become inevitable in the next few years.</i> (p. 30)	X		Diagnosis: Small and medium-sized towns and cities are becoming depopulated (p. 21)	Diagnosis: <i>Demographic forecasts predict a continuation of the depopulation process in all cities</i> (p. 23)
Development Strategy of the Western Pomeranian Voivodship	2010-2020	The diagnosis emphasises that migration processes are a development problem.	X	X	X	x	X

Annex 2: : Think tanks on migration, depopulation and welcoming initiatives – overview of publications

I.p.	Think tank's name	Words searched [PL / EN] migranci, migracje / migrants migrations	depopulacja, wyludnianie / depopulation	Przyjazny / welcoming	Content of the publication
					<p>European leader in this respect. Secondly, the importance of foreign workers has grown significantly. This still applies to selected sectors (agriculture, construction, domestic services), but their number has systematically grown (gastronomy, trade). A clear sign of this is the increasing presence of immigrants, even in small towns. Fourthly, most of these processes result from a) the functioning of the simplified procedure and b) the migration activity of Ukrainian citizens."</p> <p>https://www.case-research.eu/pl/znaczenie-imigracji-zarobkowej-dla-gospodarki-polski-100390</p>
2.	CASE	Oskar Chmiel, Piotr Kaźmierkiewicz, Karalina Sauka, Agnieszka Kulesa (red.) MIGRACJE BIAŁORUSINÓW DO POLSKI I UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ Krajobraz po sierpniu 2020 r. /THE MIGRATION OF BELARUSIANS TO POLAND AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: The Situation after August 2020 (2021)			<p>The authors of this 54page report "(...) highlight main aspects related to labour migration paths of Belarusians to the European Union, and especially to Poland. As evidence shows, this path is still the most popular one for those wishing to leave Belarus for the EU. The summary consists of three parts. The first lists the most crucial solutions introduced at the European Union level and specific solutions implemented in Poland, as well as in Lithuania and Germany. The second part includes a description of pull and push factors as well as an overview of the migration dynamic from Belarus to Poland in the years 2016–2021. It also presents the results of a research survey conducted amongst migrants from Belarus concerning, amongst other aspects, reasons for leaving and the migrants' situation in their countries of destination, especially in Poland. The document concludes with drafting possible scenarios of migration from Belarus to the EU and with description of Poland's potential to attract Belarusian migrants."</p> <p>https://www.case-research.eu/pl/migracje-bialorusinow-do-polski-i-unii-europejskiej-krajobraz-po-sierpniu-2020-r-101956</p>
3.	CASE	Cláudia de Freitas, Agnieszka Kulesa, Bernd Parusel, Dietrich Thranhardt; Asylum Challenges, Debates and Reforms How Germany, Poland, Portugal and Sweden have developed their asylum systems since 2015 (2021)			<p>This 17-page report consists of four parts: each on different country (Germany, Poland, Portugal, Sweden) and shows: migration trends, public debates, organization of the national asylum system and its weaknesses.</p> <p>The part about Poland is entitled: "The Polish Asylum System since 2015. A hostage to domestic politics?" The asylum trends are shown by Agnieszka Kulesa through the registration numbers, main points of entry, countries of origin. In the part on "Political Debates and Social Discourses on Asylum Seekers and Refugees" Agnieszka Kulesa describes the main points of the public debate on migrants and links it with the domestic politics: "More importantly, the crisis coincided with the autumn [2015 – SGH team's note] parliamentary elections campaign in Poland and the question of the state's response to it was highly politicized during that period. It eventually polarized both the Polish political scene as well as the society. (...) During that period the Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz (PO, [Civic Platform]) was assuring the general public that Poland would accept only "genuine refugees", not "economic migrants". (...) The 2015 parliamentary elections in Poland were scheduled to take place on 25 October. During the campaign, the main right-wing party, Law and Justice (PiS, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), skillfully presented itself as anti-immigration and strongly opposed the EC's proposals regarding a temporary relocation scheme. During the campaign, the party adroitly played on the electorate's fears by claiming, among other things, that asylum seekers and refugees were bringing to Europe not just terrorism, but also such diseases as cholera and dysentery, and thus were sources of an extraordinary threat to the internal security of Poland. (...) The anti-refugee rhetoric during the campaign and afterwards strongly influenced the public opinion. In May 2015 the percentage of Poles opposing accepting asylum-seekers from conflict zones was 21; in October 2015 this percentage reached 40. In January 2016, this number was even higher – 53% of Poles thought that Poland should not accept any refugees against modest 4% of those thinking that Poland should accept them and allow them to settle in the country. (...) Emergent migrant and refugee policy has been largely framed as a security issue, while humanitarian concerns, such as providing shelter and board to those in need, have been backgrounded. The latter has been partially addressed by non-governmental organisations (excluding those sympathising with the government) and, to some extent, by the Roman catholic Church in Poland, both advocating for a more open and charitable approach. However, European leader in this respect. Secondly, the importance of foreign workers has grown significantly. This still applies to selected sectors (agriculture, construction, domestic services), but their number has systematically grown (gastronomy, trade). A clear sign of this is the increasing presence of immigrants, even in small towns. Fourthly, most of these processes result from a) the functioning of the simplified procedure and b) the migration activity of Ukrainian citizens."</p> <p>https://www.case-research.eu/pl/znaczenie-imigracji-zarobkowej-dla-gospodarki-polski-100390</p>
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		migranci, migracje / migrants migrations	depopulacja, wyludnianie / depopulation	Przyjazny / welcoming	
					<p>their efforts to inform society (including politicians) and influence public attitudes about the root causes of exile as well as to help asylum seekers and refugees have not brought about the desired change, partially also because of the fact that the government has cut them off from the EU funding (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, FAMI). The securitization of migrant and refugee issues has resulted in some substantial changes to the Polish asylum system. The most important are preventing asylum seekers from accessing the Polish territory, the intention to introduce the so-called border procedure to the Polish law and investing in detention infrastructure. As some scholars argue, together with the PIS win in 2015, an anti-European phase in Polish asylum policy has started. Poland has not relocated any single person as part of the relocation scheme. The government continues its practice of not involving NGOs and other social actors in the development of solutions relating to asylum policy."</p> <p>In the Conclusions of the Polish part of the report Agnieszka Kulesa prepared a set of recommendations that would improve the conditions of asylum seekers in Poland.</p> <p>https://www.case-research.eu/pl/asylum-challenges-debates-and-reformshow-germany-poland-portugal-and-sweden-have-developed-their-asylum-systems-since-2015-101783</p>
4.	CASE	W poszukiwaniu nowych możliwości. Migracje cyrkulacyjne między Białorusią a Polską, Słowacją i Republiką Czeską / Circular migration between Belarus and Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic – state of play and prospects for cooperation (2021)			<p>The authors of the 113-page report focus on circular migration for economic purposes and examine the social and economic effects of circular migration between Belarus and Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The main question of the analysis is how managing circular labour migration could, in the long term, contribute to the optimization of labour resources both in the country of origin and in the countries of destination, while safeguarding the rights of migrants. The report focuses on the most recent circular flows from Belarus (2010-2019/2020). Where relevant, selected aspects of circular migration from Ukraine are also discussed.</p> <p>The report consists of four main parts: Belarus, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia. When describing the prospects for circular migration cooperation between Poland and Belarus the authors say: "Poland has some clear and lasting advantages over the other countries under study as a destination for circular migrants from Belarus (Table 9). The most fundamental is the ease of access to the territory (on account of geographic proximity and developed bus and train connections), matched by a relatively liberal system of residence and work legalisation. Second, the country has the highest share of migrants from the post-Soviet area on its labour market (predominantly from Ukraine), and it has developed a basic set of instruments for attracting and retaining migrant workers from that geographic region. Finally, the Polish economy is largely made up of small and medium-sized enterprises in a variety of sectors, which continue to be in need of a relatively low-cost but increasingly qualified workforce in order to meet rising demand for their products and services, both internally and in the EU. All these factors have stimulated labour migration, predominantly of a circular nature, from several countries in Poland's eastern neighbourhood, including Belarus."</p> <p>https://www.case-research.eu/index/?id=c1b75589c0217bb311a7374500d73e1f</p>
5.	CASE	Emilia Matys-Zaremba (CASE), Jan Bazyli Klakla (CASE), Oskar Chmiel (CASE), Kristine Østrem Alsvik (NHO), Narzędziownik dialogu społecznego na rzecz godnej pracy migrantów i uchodźców w Polsce / Social dialogue toolkit for decent work for migrants and refugees in Poland (2022)			<p>The document covers the areas of: social dialogue, selected challenges related to ensuring decent working conditions for migrants and refugees and the role and cooperation of social partners, Norwegian good practices and recommendations for strengthening social dialogue in Poland.</p> <p>https://www.case-research.eu/pl/narzedziownik-dialogu-spoecznego-na-rzecz-godnej-pracy-migrantow-i-uchodzcow-w-polsce-102177</p>
<p>Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego / Batory Foundation</p> <p>"The mission of the Batory Foundation is to build an open, democratic society – a society of people aware of their rights and responsibilities, who are actively involved in the life of their local community, country and international society. Our priorities include: improving the quality of Polish democracy, strengthening the role of civic institutions in public life, developing international cooperation and solidarity. The basic method of the Foundation's operation involves making grants to non-governmental organizations engaged in public benefit activity in Poland and in Central and Eastern Europe. The Foundation also serves as a forum for activity, hosts public debates and conferences, organizes seminars and workshops, issues publications, runs social campaigns, engages in monitoring of public institutions and advocacy efforts. It encourages solidarity and generosity by offering administration of named funds and corporate funds to support initiatives that serve the public interest." https://www.batory.org.pl/en/about-us/</p> <p>Both of the below mention articles come from 2022 and are the response to the influx of migrants from Ukraine to Poland after February 24, 2022 as well as actions and attempts to deal with this situation by the Polish authorities.</p>					
6.	Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego	Dawid Sześciło, Jaka polityka wsparcia i integracji uchodźców z Ukrainy? Wyzwanie na dziś i na lata / What policy of support and integration of refugees from Ukraine? A challenge for today and for years to come (2022)			<p>The analysis was published on the March 31st 2022, about 5 weeks after Russian invasion of Ukraine. This 15 page analysis takes lessons from the more experienced countries in the area of support of refugees, but is also based on the Polish experience from the recent weeks (after the Russian invasion).</p> <p>Sześciło says „We have learned that effective action in such conditions is possible only in the co-management formula, i.e. through the involvement of all public and social actors - from individuals and informal groups, through social organizations, local governments and business, to government administration. Therefore, we must think about institutional solutions that will be based on the subjective and partnership role of all these actors. This must mean a fundamental change in the operating model of the current government, which over the years has accustomed us to systematically weakening social partners or local governments and emphasizing its agency and ability to independently solve problems and cope with challenges. This was often accompanied by the crediting of local governments or NGOs, which we have also observed during the current crisis. Avoiding speculation as to whether a change of attitude is possible at all, let us consider what a multi-level and partnership-based integration policy should look like."</p> <p>Then, while describing the short term challenges, Sześciło says: "At the level of regulating the formal status, the Polish state proved its solidarity with people affected by the war. Statutory guarantees, however, can quickly lose their effect in practice, and not only due to financial constraints. (...) Even with the optimistic assumption that Poland will obtain large financial support to help refugees from Ukraine, a more difficult barrier to overcome may be the structural weakness of our system of public services, especially in such areas as health or housing."</p> <p>The second part of the publication is devoted to discussing the long-term challenge: the need for an integration policy. "Ignoring the phenomenon [of migration - SGH team's note] can be seen even at the level of official government documents. We still have not seen not only the government's integration policy, but also a broader migration policy. Last year, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration published a draft of the document "Polish migration policy - directions activities 2021-2023". According to the government's list of legislative works, it was supposed to be adopted by the Council of Ministers in the last quarter of 2021, but so far it remains in government drawers. In the current, completely changed situation, its adoption would be pointless anyway, and the comprehensiveness of this document is rather an illustration of how not to write public policy."</p> <p>The next part of the analysis describes multi-level co-management of integration and proposes recommendations: "Within the labour division, many detailed mechanisms and institutional solutions are possible, which can be implemented at the local level. At the same time, we should avoid an approach that imposes a specific model of integration from the central level, and should rather focus on enabling the development of local initiatives and programs</p>

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		migranci, migracje / migrants migrations	depopulacja, wyludnianie / depopulation	Przyjazny / welcoming	
					with strong financial support from the centre. (...) It seems that we should avoid striving to provide a fully uniform standard of integration services throughout the country. While setting a minimum standard together with ensuring its financing from central funds seems obvious, in the remaining scope integration programs should be shaped locally and adapted to the needs and characteristics of the group of refugees located in a given area. https://www.batory.org.pl/publikacja/jaka-polityka-wsparcia-i-integracji-uchodzcow-z-ukrainy-wyzwanie-na-dzis-i-najuta/
7.	Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego	Zofia Grudzińska, Jaka powinna być polityka edukacyjna wobec uchodźców z Ukrainy? / What should be the educational policy towards refugees from Ukraine? (2022)			The analysis was published on the May 5 th 2022, about 2,5 month after Russian invasion of Ukraine. This 12 pages analysis take up the topic of children and youth who crossed the Polish border after February 24, 2022 and, according to Polish law, have the right to education in Polish schools. Grudzińska asks two questions: 1. Has the state's educational policy towards refugees from Ukraine been chosen in the right direction? 2. Is this policy implemented efficiently? Grudzińska claims "If asked, the representatives of the Ministry of Education would certainly talk about the intention to integrate [children and youth - SGH team's note], but the actions clearly indicate the implementation of the assimilation model. (...) The adopted legal solutions also indicate the pursuit of assimilation: Ukrainian children are to either join education in "normal" classes, or enrol in preparatory classes created by individual schools or jointly by several schools, in order to eventually blend in in our education system. (...) The Ministry of Education and Science chose, consciously or not, the least favourable option for the well-being of refugees, but the "simplest" option for the central administration. It is worth recalling that, even if the ethical aspect is omitted, the proposed actions are by no means easy for contractors, local governments and educational institutions." The article ends with a set of recommendations, from which two key ones follow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the refugees that will want to stay in Poland for longer or even permanently despite the end of the war "The Ministry of Education and Science should abandon the current policy of pretending that nothing is happening and that Ukrainian children function in our schools as normally as possible, without the need to introduce regulations that go further than increasing the number of school classes. In parallel with an extensive program of training for teachers and workshops enabling Polish students to learn about elements of Ukrainian culture, as well as with the employment of a sufficient number of intercultural assistants, specific decisions should be made regarding the assessment system and exams, as well as an effective system for diagnosing the needs and capabilities of individual students should be introduced, so to direct them to optimally matched educational paths. Moreover, one must not forget that the first condition for successfully surviving the crisis is to take care of the mental well-being of children and young people, perhaps at the cost of several months of regular education. (...) For the remaining group of refugee students who did not appear in Polish schools (because they plan to return to their homeland) - and judging by the estimates, they are the majority - optimal conditions for continuing education according to the curriculum of the Ukrainian school should be created as soon as possible. The Ukrainian school still works." https://www.batory.org.pl/publikacja/jaka-powinna-byc-polityka-edukacyjna-wobec-uchodzcow-z-ukrainy/
	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich (OSW) / Centre for Eastern Studies "The Centre is a Polish state analytical centre based in Warsaw. It was established in 1990 as a public institution financed from the central administration budget. OSW is focused on analysis of key processes and events that take place in Poland's broad international surrounding. Our portfolio includes Russia, Caucasus and Central Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic Sea Rim (Germany, Scandinavia and Baltic States), as well as China, Turkey and Israel. Our task is to monitor political, social and economic processes, offer both up-to-date and in-depth analyses to our government, as well as participate in debates in expert and academic communities in Poland and abroad. To fulfil this task, there are over forty analysts employed." (https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/o-nas) In its analyses, OSW focuses on the dangers and risks of migration - with the exception of the more neutral texts discussing labour migration from Ukraine. In particular, OSW talks about 'surge' and 'threat' in texts discussing the so-called 'migration crisis' of 2015 and its consequences and the crisis on the Belarusian border.				
8.	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich	Marta Jaroszewicz; współpraca: Wadim Striełkowski, Tomáš Ducháč; Perspektywy migracji Ukraińców do UE / Prospects of migration of Ukrainians to the EU (2014)			The short commentary (6 pages) deals with the situation after the events of 18-20 February 2014 (Maidan Revolution). It concludes by pointing out that migration may increase slightly as a result of the uncertain political and economic situation, but that mass migration is not expected in the long term: "The lack of prospects for an improvement in the situation in the country may cause more Ukrainians to opt for circular migration as a way of functioning. Settlement migration, especially of young people, may also increase. However, significant migration from Ukraine to the EU should not be expected in the long term."
9.	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich	Marta Jaroszewicz, Kryzysowa migracja Ukraińców / Crisis migration of Ukrainians (2015)			A short commentary (8 pages) describes how migration from Ukraine changed in 2015. The text points out that migration - but not overall to the EU, but mainly to Poland - has accelerated. It emphasises that the majority is temporary migration, related to short-term work permits. "The year 2015 brought a more rapid increase in the scale of departures from Ukraine to the EU, mainly to Poland (...) In Poland in October this year. Ukrainians held 52,000 valid residence cards. Much higher dynamics is observed in the case of temporary migration - the number of declarations authorising short-term work in Poland, issued in the first half of 2015, amounted to as many as 400 thousand, which means an increase of more than double, as in the whole of 2014 372 thousand statements were issued to Ukrainians (...) The prolonged armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, as a result of which about 6 thousand people were killed and about 2 million people had to leave their homes, had an impact on the noticeable increase in the number of applications for refugee status submitted in EU countries by Ukrainian citizens."
10.	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich	Marta Jaroszewicz, Migracje z Ukrainy do Polski stabilizacja trendu / Migrations from Ukraine to Poland stabilization of the trend (2018)			The report (19 pages with cover) consists of a presentation of the key theses, including an emphasis that migration from Ukraine will decline. An indication that, in 2017, Poland became the 'global leader when it comes to the inflow of foreign seasonal short-term labour'. This is followed by a discussion of the new rules for the employment of foreigners and the broader context of Ukrainian migration (to Poland from the perspective of Ukrainian studies) and other countries, and a brief outline of the near future. It is also highlighted once again that although migration from Ukraine is currently relatively high, it should decrease in the long term: "It is worth bearing in mind that, at the macro level, the current migration wave from Ukraine to Poland is a social reaction to a shock situation (the outbreak of armed conflict and the sharp deterioration of the economic situation) and should not be regarded as a long-term trend." From the perspective of 2022, we know that migration has not decreased; moreover, a new shock situation has emerged with the Russian full-scale attack. In short, for several years now, increasing migration from Ukraine was perceived and treated as temporary and mainly related to the labour market. However, it seems that to some extent this will be a permanent migration
11.	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich	Piotr Żochowski, Białoruś: eskalacja kryzysu migracyjnego / Belarus: the escalation of the migration crisis (2021)			Online article titled 'Belarus: an escalation of the migration crisis', which summarises (as of 2021-10-27) the situation on the border with Belarus. It presents migration as a tool for the escalation of tensions by the authorities in Belarus: "The Belarusian government assumes that exerting migration pressure is an effective means of politically destabilising Poland and it also hopes that it will affect Poland's position in the international arena as a country which has contributed to the creation of an instability zone in Europe by "barricading" the border. The fact that migrants are continually

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					arriving at the border demonstrates that the Lukashenka regime has no plans to stop using them as an instrument of aggression." https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2021-10-27/belarus-escalation-migration-crisis
12.	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich	Joanna Hyndle-Hussein, Kryzys migracyjny na Litwie / Migration crisis in Lithuania (2021)			Online article titled 'Migration crisis in Lithuania' (2021-07-23). The text describes the situation on Lithuania's border with Belarus looking for similarities between the situation of Poland and Lithuania and similarly outlines the context of the crisis: "Lukashenko has chosen Lithuania, as well as Poland experiencing gradually increasing migratory pressure, as the main targets of his action of instrumentally using migrants (mainly economic). On the one hand, Lukashenko sees these actions as retaliation for his support for the Belarusian opposition and the European sanctions most actively demanded by Lithuania, while on the other hand he is trying to get the EU to enter into dialogue with his administration." https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2021-07-23/kryzys-migracyjny-na-litwie
13.	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich	Piotr Żochowski, współpraca Marek Menkiszak, Wsparcie dla Łukaszenki. Rosja wobec kryzysu migracyjnego/ Support for Lukashenko. Russia and the migration crisis (2021)			Online article titled 'Support for Lukashenka. Russia's response to the migration crisis' (2021-11-09). The text is part of a series of articles describing the situation on the Belarusian border as actions by Russia and Belarus aimed at destabilising the situation in Poland and the EU more broadly. As in the other texts, the humanitarian dimension of migration does not appear in any other context than as a 'tool' to attack Poland. "Moscow is interested in a controlled escalation of the crisis in order to use it as a form of political and kinetic pressure on Western states, without formally bearing any responsibility for it. Lukashenka's continuation of the current actions serves the Kremlin's interests, as this fuels the political dispute in Poland over how to respond to the threat, aggravates the situation on the EU border, generates discussion inside the EU on how to deal with the humanitarian problem, and tests the resilience of the Polish security system, Poland's armed forces and NATO as a whole (...) This crisis is a focus point in the Russian information operation." https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2021-11-09/support-lukashenka-russias-response-to-migration-crisis
14.	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich	Marta Jaroszewicz, Marta Szpala, Propozycje reformy polityki migracyjnej UE / Proposals for reforming the EU's migration policy (2018)			Online article titled 'EU migration policy reform proposals' (2018-06-27). Summarises "The European Council meeting on 28-29 June was dedicated to trying to find a compromise on migration policy reform." Includes discussion of the Dublin Regulation. In its wording, it is technocratic and neutral. It discusses the different positions of individual EU countries, including Poland. It also includes an annex with basic migration figures from 2017-2018. "Within the EU, there are at least three groups of countries with different priorities regarding EU migration policy. The Visegrad Group countries speak out primarily against mandatory relocation mechanisms. The group of first-arrival countries seeks to limit as much as possible the reception of migrants on their territory by reforming the Dublin system and setting up centres outside the EU. A group of countries in the middle of the continent, such as Germany or France, are pushing for the creation of mechanisms to expel migrants to the first EU countries and to limit secondary movements within the EU." https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2018-06-27/propozycje-reformy-polityki-migracyjnej-ue
15.	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich	Jakub Groszkowski, Kulisy planu „B”: wyszehradzka perspektywa kryzysu migracyjnego / Behind the scenes of plan "B": the Visegrad perspective on the migration crisis (2016)			Online article titled 'Behind the scenes of plan B: the migration crisis seen from the perspective of the Visegrad Group' (2016-02-17). It is devoted to presenting the perspectives of the Visegrad countries (including Poland in particular) on the so-called migration crisis of 2015. Migrants are here - following the perspective of the Visegrad countries - seen as a 'wave' to be contained. "During the meeting, the prime ministers of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland, along with the president of Macedonia and the prime minister of Bulgaria, declared support for the EU's moves aimed at slowing down the influx of migrants to the EU via the Balkans (...). Although Slovakia and Hungary strongly criticised Athens before the summit, the final declaration emphasises the need for all EU member states (including Greece) and transit countries to co-operate in order to resolve the migration crisis. The Central European leaders emphasised that the Visegrad Group's backup plan was complementary to the EU's recent efforts to control the wave of migration. " https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2016-02-17/behind-scenes-plan-b-migration-crisis-seen-perspective-visegrad
16.	Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich	Krzysztof Dębiec, współpraca Andrzej Sadecki, Marta Szpala, Adam Michalski, Europa Środkowa wobec nowej fali migracji z kierunku bałkańskiego / Central Europe and the new wave of migration from the Balkan direction (2022)			Online article titled 'Central Europe facing a new wave of migration from the Balkans' (2022-10-21). An online article summarising the current (October 2022) migration situation in the region. The text - maintained like most OSW texts - in the climate of the threat of a 'refugee wave' discusses the increase in the number of migrants on the so-called 'Balkan route' and points to the role of Turkey, which 'in a time of severe economic crisis and social frustration' is allowing this to happen. "According to Frontex, in the first nine months of 2022, the number of attempted illegal crossings of the EU's external borders in the Western Balkan section increased by 1,500% compared to 2019 and by 170% compared to 2021. The Western Balkans accounted for 47% (or 106,000) of all incidents at the EU borders (...) A 118% year-on-year increase - to a total of 29,000 cases - was recorded at the borders of Bulgaria, Greece and Cyprus during the same period. In contrast, according to the Bulgarian Interior Ministry, there were 85,000 attempted illegal crossings on its border with Turkey between January and August - double the number for the entirety of 2021 (41,000). The vast majority of arrivals from this direction are Syrians and Afghans." https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2022-10-21/central-europe-facing-a-new-wave-migration-balkans
Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych (PISM) / Polish Institute of International Affairs The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) is a leading Central European think tank that positions itself between the world of politics and independent analysis. PISM provides analytical support to decision-makers and diplomats, initiates public debate and disseminates expert knowledge about contemporary international relations. The Institute carries out its own research, cooperates on international research projects, prepares reports and analyses and collaborates with institutions with a similar profile worldwide. (https://www.pism.pl/about_us/about-pism)					
17.	Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych	Patrycja Sasnal (red.) Niekontrolowane migracje do Unii Europejskiej – implikacje dla Polski / Uncontrolled migrations to the European Union - implications for Poland (2015)			This 68 pages report „Uncontrolled migrations to the European Union - implications for Poland” consists of several parts covering different aspects of the topic: the EU's institutional and political response to the migration crisis, migrants and refugees from the Middle East, migrants and refugees from the Western Balkans, migrants and refugees from Ukraine, migrants and refugees from outside the EU neighbourhood - Africa and Asia, migration-related security threats, social and economic consequences of migration for Poland. In each of the chapter on the migrants and refugees the size and characteristics was described. The two most interesting socio-economic results for Poland are:

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		migranci, migracje / migrants migrations	depopulacja, wyludnianie / depopulation	Przyjazny / welcoming	
					<p>“The necessity of integration activities towards the immigrant population is only one side of the migration process - the other side is the need to implement information campaigns about non-European civilization circles in the receiving society. Nowhere is it more urgent than in homogeneous countries such as Poland.</p> <p>– The media is an unprecedented factor influencing the preferences and knowledge of both migrant and host societies. Sometimes they present and reproduce an unreliable, inaccurate and uncontrollable picture of the situation, shaping social attitudes. This makes it all the more important to get an accurate message on migration from experts and officials.”</p> <p>https://pism.pl/publikacje/Raport_PISM_Niekontrolowane_migracje_do_Unii_Europejskiej_implikacje_dla_Polski</p>
18.	Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych	Kinga Dudzińska, Jakub Godzimirski, Roderick Parkes “Border and Migration Management in the East: The Cases of Norway and Poland” (2015)			<p>16 pages paper “Border and Migration Management in the East: The Cases of Norway and Poland” examines how the geographical proximity of Russia binds Poland and Norway together on the question how to manage the border with Russia taking into account that Russian actions may trigger a new wave of forced migration in Europe that can reach both Norway and Poland. The paper focuses in particular on the Norway’s and Poland’s approaches to border and migration management in relations with both Russia and, in more broad terms, the eastern border of the EU/EEA, and it pays special attention to the issue of the migration of women from Eastern Europe to Poland and Norway.</p> <p>https://pism.pl/publikacje/PISM_Policy_Paper_nr_31_133_Border_and_Migration_Management_in_the_East_The_Cases_of_Norway_and_Poland</p>
19.	Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych	Patryk Kugiel, Rola pomocy rozwojowej w rozwiązywaniu kryzysu uchodźczego / The role of development aid in solving the refugee crisis (2016)			<p>2 pages online newsletter “The role of development aid in solving the refugee crisis” consists of short information on the main country - receivers of the development aid, the changes after 2015 crisis and the role of development aid for European Union as well as about the challenges, which are: not enough funding and the fact that only a small amount of refugees lives in the camps, where they can benefit from the development aid.</p> <p>The conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The end of the war in Syria and the stabilization of Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya are of key importance for overcoming the crisis at its root.” • “Development and humanitarian aid remains one of the main instruments of influencing the situation in countries origin of migrants. In the long run, it can contribute to creating conditions for development and leveling development differences, and will serve to stabilize the EU’s neighbourhood. To increase her impact and effectiveness, it is necessary first of all to radically increase financial outlays and fulfil own ones commitments in this regard.” <p>https://pism.pl/publikacje/Rola_pomocy_rozwojowej_w_rozwi_zywaniu_kryzysu_uchod_czego</p>
20.	Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych	Jolanta Szymańska, Pakt w sprawie migracji i azylu – sprzężenie systemu azylowego z polityką powrotów / Pact on Migration and Asylum - linking the asylum system with return policy (2020)			<p>2 pages online newsletter “Pact on migration and asylum - linking the asylum system with return policy” is on the Pact on Migration and Asylum, which was presented on September 23 by the EC. The Pact was based on a new mechanism of solidarity: as an alternative to relocation, it allowed Member States to pay for returns of people who do not qualify for protection. The extraordinary mechanism, providing for the relocation of people who could not be returned, would most likely raise controversy.</p> <p>The starting point to this procedure would be “to separate foreigners who qualify for international protection from those who have no grounds to stay in the EU. Under the new solidarity mechanism, Member States will be able to choose to relocate people with a clear need for protection (while receiving EU financial assistance) or another form of support. The main one will be financing the return of migrants without the right to asylum. Returns, which are an inherent part of the new migration management system, may prove to be a barrier to the EC’s plans. Currently, only around 30% of return decisions in the EU result in the return of migrants. In turn, humanitarian organizations may have concerns about treating returns as a remedy for migration problems. Moreover, the introduction of the accelerated procedure at the borders raises the risk of errors and, at the same time, concerns about limiting the right of migrants to obtain international protection.”</p> <p>https://pism.pl/publikacje/Pakt_w_sprawie_migracji_i_azylu_sprzezenie_systemu_azylowego_z_polityka_powroto_w</p>
21.	Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych	Patryk Kugiel, Pomoc rozwojowa i przyczyny migracji: ryzykowna droga do niepewnych rozwiązań / Development aid and reasons for migration: a risky road to uncertain solutions (2021)			<p>This 25 pages report is divided into three chapters: 1. development and migration - complex and multidimensional relationships; 2. aid and migration management in practice 3. final remarks and recommendations. Cases were analysed where assistance turned out to be an effective tool of European migration policy and when it was less effective. The long-term consequences of such an approach were also studied.</p> <p>“A policy focused on addressing the root causes of migration through development aid is based on false assumptions and will not deliver the desired results. According to the state of art, along with the economic development of poor countries, more and more people will be willing to emigrate until the state of residence will achieve a relatively high level of development. This is because aspirations and travel opportunities are growing faster than the objective economic situation. Endless migratory pressures will persist as long as there are enormous inequalities economic between rich and poor countries. Development aid alone cannot stop voluntary economic migration. When it comes to forced migration, the reasons the source is usually associated with political conflict and violence, and financial aid can seldom provide solutions to end conflict and political instability.”</p> <p>“The EU has used its economic advantage to limit the flow of refugees and migrants to its shores, but the scope of these actions has not resolved the ‘original problems’ causes of migration. Rather, it influenced the externalization of European border management through, among others, a deal with Turkey paid for by taxpayers.”</p> <p>“To sum up, the European refugee management crisis has contributed to two more problems: a European one regarding the EU’s capacity to react, and a real refugee crisis taking place mainly outside Europe. The former was the most visible, the true one is widely unknown. There is a geographic hierarchy at play: refugees who are closer to Europe and have the means to flee can make that decision, while those who lack the funds or opportunities remain most vulnerable in areas where access to humanitarian protection is highly uncertain.”</p> <p>https://pism.pl/publikacje/pomoc-rozwojowa-i-przyczyny-migracji-ryzykowna-droga-do-niepewnych-rozwiazan</p>
22.	Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych	Jolanta Szymańska, Exodus uchodźców z Ukrainy jako wyzwanie dla Unii Europejskiej / Exodus of refugees from Ukraine as a challenge for the European Union (2022)			<p>2 pages online newsletter “The exodus of refugees from Ukraine as a challenge for the European Union” describes a scale (3 m refugees including 1.8 m to Poland, 0.48 m to Romania, 0.27 m to Hungary, 0.21 m to Slovakia) of the migration after Russian invasion of Ukraine and the fastest exodus in Europe since World War II. The growing needs of the frontline states are described: “Non-governmental organizations and local governments operating in Ukraine’s neighbouring countries played a key role in providing humanitarian aid in the first days of the invasion. The mobilization of the host countries’ societies turned out to be unprecedented.”</p> <p>“In response to the humanitarian crisis, the EU offered financial support to both Ukraine and its neighbouring countries, which are most burdened with migratory pressure. In addition to financial support for the countries hosting the largest number of refugees, EU countries decided to legalize the stay of refugees throughout the Community.”</p> <p>“For Ukraine’s neighbouring countries with little experience in managing migration, the current refugee crisis may be a turning point in the development of national migration policies. The growing scale of needs and the nature of the challenges related to migration require them to both intensify the cooperation of local and central authorities in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and develop a long-term refugee integration strategy.”</p> <p>https://www.pism.pl/publikacje/exodus-uchodzcow-z-ukrainy-jako-wyzwanie-dla-unii-europejskiej</p>

National press on depopulation and migration

For the media content analysis, we selected two daily and two weekly newspapers. Among the daily newspapers, these were the mainstream and liberal ‘Gazeta Wyborcza’ and the right-wing Catholic ‘Nasz Dziennik’. For liberal weeklies, we focused on: the liberal ‘Newsweek Polska’ and the moderately conservative ‘Tygodnik Powszechny’. In each case, we tried to find 16 articles (8 per year) on migration and 10 articles (5 per year) on depopulation. In the media analysis, those from two periods were selected:

- 2015 - the year of the ‘migration crisis’ in Europe, which did not directly affect Poland; the year of the introduction of a temporary relocation mechanism in the EU for asylum seekers from Greece and Italy; the year of the change of power in Poland, when the conservative Law and Justice party won the parliamentary elections and its presidential candidate won the presidential elections; the year when an anti-migration and anti-refugee narrative was launched by the new ruling party in both political discourse and state media (dominant negative narrative);
- 2022 - the year at the beginning of which Russia’s full-scale aggression against Ukraine occurred and Poland became the main destination country for those fleeing; a special national law was adopted providing temporary protection for Ukrainian citizens in Poland (dominant positive narrative - limited to Ukrainian migrants). Each time, texts dealing with depopulation or migration were searched for, treating both words and their conjugation (declension of nouns in Polish) as the basis for the Internet search (see: Annex 3). Below are the results of the searches in the individual media and a brief description of the profile of the respective press title:
 - “Gazeta Wyborcza” is a nationwide opinion-forming socio-political daily with a centrist-liberal profile, published since 1989 in Warsaw by Agora SA. For the purpose of the media analysis, paid access to the wyborcza.pl portal was used, and in the Archive section texts matching the subject matter were selected using an internal search engine, and then a total of 26 of the most relevant articles were selected for in-depth analysis using expert assessment.
 - “Nasz Dziennik” is a national daily newspaper with a Catholic-national profile, published in Warsaw by Spes sp. z o.o. The paper has been in existence since 1998. The newspaper was initiated by Tadeusz Rydzyk (a Roman Catholic clergyman). A total of 26 articles were searched for in-depth analysis, but while the limit was met in the case of migration topics (16 articles), in the case of depopulation the planned 10 articles were not found, but only three: a text from 2015 and two from 2022, making a total of 19 texts.
 - “Newsweek Polska” is a socio-political weekly with a liberal profile published since 2001 in Warsaw under licence from Newsweek Inc. After an initial search in the search engine by keywords for matching articles, an expert selection was made for relevance and 16 texts on migration (for

2015 and 2022 combined) and 5 on depopulation from 2015 were selected according to the criteria applied, while the limit of texts on depopulation from 2022 was extended to 8 articles, resulting in a total of 29 articles.

- “Tygodnik Powszechny” is a Catholic weekly that covers socio-cultural and political issues. It has been published since 1945. It was founded by Cardinal Adam Sapieha, but is not a church publication. For the media analysis, paid access to the Tygodnik Powszechny digital archive was used and the tables of contents of all issues of the Tygodnik from 2015 and 2022 were analysed. After a preliminary analysis of the content of the articles, the following were classified for further qualitative analysis: 24 articles on migration issues (12 from 2015 and 12 from 2022) and 2 articles on depopulation (one each from 2015 and 2022), i.e. 26 articles.

It is worth noting that while the topic of migration appeared regularly in the media, the issue of depopulation did not receive as much attention. Below is a brief summary, for each area along with a comparison of the narrative in selected years.

In the case of depopulation in 2015, articles referring to demographic data predominated, e.g. the results of the Central Statistical Office’s report on urban population cited in various media. The process itself and its consequences were pointed out, as were the processes of suburbanisation. A neutral tone prevailed, although there were some texts on the benefits of depopulation and good examples of smaller and thus more friendly cities, as well as pointing out the risks (with reference to the case of an American city of Detroit). Only one text in ‘Nasz Dziennik’ frightened of migration and the consequences of voting for Civic Platform (the opposition of the ruling party). At times, depopulation was also a pretext for discussing fertility determinants and family policy. The number of articles in 2022 increased slightly, but the dominant way of talking about the depopulation process did not change. Again, the informative tone, reference to statistics and the context of fertility dominated. However, a slight shift to a more pessimistic view of demography, or even writing at times about a demographic catastrophe, should be highlighted. A novelty compared to 2015 was the few texts explicitly referring to migration from Ukraine, where both – the challenges involved and the need to organise support (e.g. in the context of becoming a multicultural state) - were pointed out, as well as the demographic benefits. However, the perspective of large cities - where the majority of Ukrainian migrants also settled - continued to dominate the media. The topic of migration can be considered much more ‘hot’ in Polish politics, which was reflected both quantitatively and qualitatively in the media. There were more texts than in the case of depopulation, and they were also more often emotionally tinged, rather than just neutral news coverage. Moreover, in the case of 2015, a clear division can be seen between media favouring the Law and Justice party and its anti-immigrant rhetoric, including criticism of Civic Platform’s government/migration policy (‘Nasz Dziennik’) and others. In the case of ‘Nasz Dziennik’, the description of the so-called migration crisis, i.e. the large influx of refugees to Europe in the context of threats to Poland, dominates. In the case of the other media, most of the texts also deal with the so-called migration crisis, and a neutral tone is intermingled with a pro-migrant one, in the case of ‘Tygodnik Powszechny’ referring directly to Christian values.

On this occasion, there are also articles describing the broader context of migration, including the determinants of decision-making (why people migrate), migration policy at EU and national levels, or the benefits of migration for Poland, as well as the historical context of migration from the 19th and 20th centuries. With regard to 2022, the texts on migration can be divided into three thematic blocks. The first is related to the situation on the border with Belarus, the decision to build a wall there, the policy of the Polish authorities and the relations of aid organisations operating in that area. The second concerns Ukrainian migration, both in terms of its scale, the challenges it poses and examples of positive actions/ solutions. The further into 2022 one goes, the more often there are texts trying to summarise the whole process and point out its strengths and weaknesses, and one important thread is the problem of education of Ukrainian children in Polish schools. The third are texts related to the issue of depopulation and migration processes contributing to the depopulation of certain areas, but also the needs of the Polish labour market met by foreign workers. As in 2015, 'Nasz Dziennik' stands out from the rest, replicating the government's narrative regarding the border with Belarus and the negative attitude towards forced migrants from countries other than Ukraine. For the other media outlets, the texts are more diverse, with several highlighting the dualism of Polish migration policy, as well as the public's attitude towards migrants.

Annex 3: word clouds for “migration” and “depopulation”



Word cloud: Migration

Based on the articles selected for in-depth qualitative analysis, two thematic word clouds were prepared in MaxQDA software - one comprising articles on migration (72 texts) and the other on depopulation (28 texts). The migration cloud shows words with a minimum frequency of 25 in the analysed articles-91 such words were identified in Polish. Due to the case-coincidence variation of words in Polish, the number of categories corresponding to Polish words in English decreased to 60 (a detailed breakdown is presented in the legend).

Legend to the word cloud Migration (in order of highest frequency word categories)

No. of category	Category of words in English	Frequency of word categories	No. of words	Words in Polish	Word frequency
1.	Poland	405	1.	Polsce	164
			2.	Polska	94
			3.	Polski	147
2.	refugees	363	4.	uchodźcom	28
			5.	uchodźców	246
			6.	uchodźcy	89
3.	people	208	7.	ludzi	124
			8.	ludzie	84
4.	borders	168	9.	granic	27
			10.	granice	35
			11.	granicy	106
5.	country	166	12.	kraj	32
			13.	krajów	43
			14.	kraju	91
6.	help	165	15.	pomoc	81
			16.	pomocy	84
7.	Europe	148	17.	Europa	27
			18.	Europie	33
			19.	Europy	88
8.	work	146	20.	pracę	49
			21.	pracy	97
9.	thousands	141	22.	tys.	93
			23.	tysięcy	48
10.	individuals	137	24.	osoby	29
			25.	osób	108
11.	EU	134	26.	UE	32
			27.	unia	26
			28.	unii	76
12.	Ukraine	134	29.	Ukrainie	36
			30.	Ukrainy	98
13.	migrants	131	31.	migranci	36
			32.	migrantów	95
14.	war	129	33.	wojna	35
			34.	wojną	33
			35.	wojny	61
15.	Ukrainians	128	36.	Ukraińców	59
			37.	Ukraińcy	41
			38.	ukraińskich	28
16.	states	112	39.	państw	27
			40.	państwa	52
			41.	państwo	33
17.	Poles	105	42.	Polacy	45
			43.	Polaków	60
18.	Polish	104	44.	polskich	36
			45.	polskie	25
			46.	polskiego	43
19.	children	94	47.	dzieci	94
20.	life	84	48.	życia	45
			49.	życie	39
21.	all	70	50.	wszyscy	29
			51.	wszystkich	41
22.	home	70	52.	dom	25
			53.	domu	45
23.	immigrants	62	54.	imigrantów	62
24.	Syria	61	55.	Syrii	61
25.	days	48	56.	dni	48
26.	other	46	57.	innych	46

No. of category	Category of words in English	Frequency of word categories	No. of words	Words in Polish	Word frequency
27.	beginning	43	58.	początku	43
28.	migrations	41	59.	migracji	41
29.	time	40	60.	czas	40
30.	European	40	61.	europejskiej	40
31.	way	39	62.	sposób	39
32.	millions	37	63.	mln	37
33.	policies	37	64.	polityki	37
34.	government	37	65.	rząd	37
35.	them	36	66.	oni	36
36.	money	36	67.	pieniądze	36
37.	crisis	34	68.	kryzysu	34
38.	months	33	69.	miesiący	33
39.	among	33	70.	wśród	33
40.	themselves	32	71.	sami	32
41.	dollars	31	72.	dolarów	31
42.	years	31	73.	lata	31
43.	problem	31	74.	problem	31
44.	together	31	75.	razem	31
45.	their	31	76.	swoich	31
46.	Africa	30	77.	Afryki	30
47.	language	30	78.	języka	30
48.	residents	30	79.	mieszkańców	30
49.	euro	29	80.	euro	29
50.	places	29	81.	miejsca	29
51.	prime minister	29	82.	premier	29
52.	our	27	83.	naszych	27
53.	organizations	27	84.	organizacje	27
54.	system	27	85.	system	27
55.	never	26	86.	nigdy	26
56.	guard	26	87.	straż	26
57.	foundations	25	88.	fundacji	25
58.	any	25	89.	każdy	25
59.	women	25	90.	kobiety	25
60.	sea	25	91.	morze	25

Źródło: own elaboration.

According to the Migration word cloud, the most frequent words in Polish articles on this topic published in 2015 and 2020 were Poland (405 times), refugees (363), people (208), borders (168), country (166), help (165), Europe (148), work (146), thousands (141), individuals (137), EU (134), Ukraine (134), migrants (131), war (129) and Ukrainians (128). These results are not surprising. Similarly, the appearance of the second word cloud developed for this report is not surprising. The depopulation cloud shows words with a minimum frequency of 15 in the articles - 38 such words were identified in Polish (the frequency criterion was lowered due to the smaller number of articles for analysis). Due to the case variation of words functioning in Polish, the number of categories corresponding to Polish words in English was reduced to 28 (a detailed breakdown is presented in the legend).



Word cloud: Depopulation

Legend to the word cloud Depopulation (in order of highest frequency word categories)

No. of category	Category of words in English	Frequency of word categories	No. of words	Words in Polish	Word frequency
1.	cities	194	1.	mieście	30
			2.	miasto	34
			3.	miasta	77
			4.	miast	53
2.	Poland	108	5.	polski	16
			6.	Polska	38
			7.	Polsce	54
3.	citizens	65	8.	mieszkańcy	25
			9.	mieszkańców	40
4.	people	58	10.	ludzie	24
			11.	ludzi	18
			12.	osób	16
5.	children	53	13.	dzieci	53
6.	work	52	14.	pracy	52
7.	PLN	41	15.	zł	41
8.	countrysides	38	16.	wsi	22
			17.	wieś	16
9.	millions	36	18.	mln	36
10.	development	34	19.	rozwój	15
			20.	rozwoju	19
11.	life	32	21.	życia	32
12.	thousands	31	22.	tys.	31
13.	refugees	26	23.	uchodźców	26
14.	president	26	24.	prezydent	26
15.	numbers	23	25.	liczby	23
16.	country	22	26.	kraju	22
17.	500	22	27.	500	22
18.	years	21	28.	latach	21
19.	age	20	29.	wieku	20
20.	Ukraine	20	30.	Ukrainy	20
21.	Polish	19	31.	polskich	19
22.	government	18	32.	rząd	18
23.	Law and Justice	18	33.	PIS	18
24.	population	16	34.	ludności	16

No. of category	Category of words in English	Frequency of word categories	No. of words	Words in Polish	Word frequency
25.	politics	15	35.	polityki	15
26.	Poles	15	36.	Polaków	15
27.	crisis	15	37.	kryzys	15
28.	lack of	15	38.	brak	15

Źródło: opracowanie własne.

For Polish articles on the topic of depopulation, published in 2015 and 2022, the most frequent word categories were: cities (194 times), Poland (108), citizens (65), people (58), children (53), work (52).

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CONCLUSIONS

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The analysis of the various national reports reveals a panorama of media representations and the imagery they convey that is extremely varied, demonstrating different degrees of journalistic neutrality and different degrees of representation that both territorial areas and social groups have compared to others. What also emerges is the power that the mediatisation of certain events has in consolidating specific representations of the migration phenomenon and the progressive consolidation of certain interpretative categories over others. The high diversity found in the survey between Countries as well as the differences between national and local contexts themselves excludes the possibility of arriving at generic final considerations.

However, it is nevertheless possible to state that both the phenomenon of reception and reception in shrinking areas are “marginal” topics in the media and public debate compared to the preponderant one of migration.

As recalled at the beginning of this Introduction, the role of the media is evident in the process of both the symbolic and social construction of reality (Berger and Luckman, 1984), as well as the media framing effects not only in what to think but also in how to do it (McCombs, 2005). Therefore, the common media marginalisation of reception in shrinking areas by the national mainstream media may further exacerbate the public’s perception of “remoteness” towards a central issue as it emerged in the other Project Final Reports. As a consequence, an analysis of this kind conducted among different European contexts is fruitful in gaining an in-depth understanding of how the perception of “remoteness” or “closeness” occurs, in relation to which socio-political dynamics and voices involved. By keeping an open gaze on the declinations of similar phenomena in other contexts, the analysis thus makes it possible to identify specific gaps and potentials in the modes of representation. As well as to define possible specific actions in each context in order to achieve that the imaginaries conveyed by media result from a balanced representation of all subjects involved in social processes.

The nation-wide representation of migration has varied over the past decade from a victimizing to a criminalizing framing. The main media frames are those of “continuous emergency” and “threat” (the latter particularly exacerbated in the pandemic years). At the local scale, narratives follow those disseminated nationally with a preponderant focus on the reception system, borders, and labor exploitation. At this scale, an ambivalent representation of migrants emerges, understood as both perpetrators and victims of crimes.

Narratives about shrinking areas turn out to be varied. The Pandemic context has restored enormous centrality to rural areas, albeit superficially. The media impact of highly conscious voices (prevalent at the local scale or within niches with even national resonance) is more contained; the resonance of simplistic and standardized views, centered on a nostalgic and traditional vision of the rural, and reported by the mainstream media is preponderant. At the local scale, narratives are predominantly focused on the absence of services and small initiatives run by associations and municipalities.

Media coverage of reception initiatives is limited to the local scale, only occasionally to the national one (almost always focused on the so-called Riace “case” and trial developments). However, it has occasionally made possible the transformation of the interpretative frame on migration from one of negativeness to one of openness. News coverage focuses mainly on projects, events and initiatives run by the entities involved in reception projects.

Spain

At the national level, there are multiple frames through which different migratory movements are represented. However, the prevailing lens is an ethnocentric one, generally linked to a negative (dehumanising, alarmist) sentiment and a tendentially utilitarian view when it is related to demographic challenges. The main frames concern migration policies, flows towards Europe and third sector actions to support socially vulnerable migrants. Significant media coverage on integration and migrant-led initiatives is absent. As well as a representation of migrant women, generally portrayed as victims and secondary actors in the migration process. On the local scale, instead, the representation of the migration phenomenon is ambivalent, divided between a positive perception linked to a utilitarian view of newcomers and a negative one, that represents them either as criminals or as victims.

At the national level “depopulation” (the predominant frame at the national scale) and “demographic challenge” currently appear as stable topics in the media agendas, although often framed, even at the local scale, in the dichotomy opposing urban and rural areas. The latter are generally

represented as peaceful and bucolic places, as part of a tourism purposes. There is an overall ambivalent representation: on the one hand there is high attention to the problem, on the other hand the tone is often pessimistic and marked by victimization and linked to negative stereotypes about rurality (the idea of “disappearance” is frequent). In addition, it emerges how there is a mismatch between media representation and inhabitants’ perceptions.

Regarding welcoming initiatives, there is little national media and research coverage. People with migration backgrounds are generally silenced, represented as passive subjects. Specifically on selected welcoming initiatives, the degree of representation varies from the local to the national scale depending on the different contexts. One common aspect concerns the positive tone with which welcoming initiatives are described (places of peaceful coexistence), demonstrating a correspondence between interviews and media representation.

The Netherlands

The media’s approach to migration is characterised by the absence of a specific frame, although a few more frequent ones emerge, such as the human interest, the threat, the governance, and the economic framework. Moreover, the interpretative categories of “burden” (with the exception of labour migrants) and “crisis” are frequent. Hence, the recurring term “asielcrisis” to refer to the “asylum crisis”, towards which the media approach is not always neutral. However, the crisis media representations is partly counterbalanced by narratives which are careful to highlight the human side of the migration phenomenon. In general, it emerges that the voice of migrants is not entirely absent, while that of politicians, dominant parties, organisations and experts is preponderant.

There is also no dominant frame for the narratives on shrinking areas, although they are often subject of media attention and public debates. However, themes more closely linked to the lack of services, nostalgic perspectives or linked to a sense of hope for the future emerge as recurring. As well as the attempt by officials and businessmen to invert the negative connotation that the category “shrinking area” carries in favour of a more dynamic and regional branding perspective emerges.

Nationwide attention on welcoming initiatives is limited, and even more on projects in shrinking areas. Indeed, the latter are almost exclusively conveyed by regional and local/community media. The analysis shows how welcoming spaces are defined according to the point of view of locals and, increasingly, of migrants, who are represented as part of society. Also in this case, there is no precise narrative frame. In general, the tone of the news is superficial, not very in-depth, and tending to be positive. The link between migration and the

Germany

The migration topic was, until 2015, a marginal issue in media coverage and political debate, framed in a neutral way. However, the political sphere and the positions of politicians have the most resonance in media discourse. In this context, Chancellor Merkel's famous statement "We can do it" – referring to the exceptional arrival of migrants in the summer of 2015 –, fits within a narrative that is not only humanitarian but also economic, in which migration is linked to Germany's economic growth. The media frame migrants as a positive factor for the German economy, with the exception of the extreme right-wing individuals and groups. Following the events of New Year's Eve 2015 in Cologne, some newspapers adopted a manipulative and highly prejudicial approach towards migrants and refugees; more generally, the latter were often associated with crime, framed as those who perpetuate violence (beyond a neutral and objective approach) – although a climate of violence has grown towards them. On a local scale, attention to migration is marginal. Narratives about shrinking areas – defined as "rural areas" – are framed as struggling political entities. Narration focused on the challenges to be faced but also on the initiatives and efforts made to tackle the problem and revitalise shrinking areas. German media tend to maintain a technical narrative, focusing on the demographical numbers and trends. Occasionally, thematic frames are those of exodus (Der Spiegel). Finally, the analysis of the narratives concerning welcoming initiatives highlights the precarious situation faced by the associations due to the lack of financial support from the state (through a critical discourse and a focus on advocacy for integration from a humanitarian perspective).

Poland

National and regional documents' analysis reveals different political and narrative standards adopted in relation to the different categories of migrants; overall, the securitarian frame prevails while humanitarian concerns are backgrounded. National and regional documents frame migration from a utilitarian perspective to cope with population decline and labour demand. Furthermore, at regional level, migrants are sometimes negatively connoted or mentioned as one of the groups particularly vulnerable to exclusion. The issue of shrinking areas is addressed to the greatest extent in relation to depopulation.

At national level, depopulation is one of the main factors in identifying problem areas in Poland; at regional level, depopulation is framed as the main barrier to development. No reference are made to welcoming space at national and regional level; occasionally, very small at local scale. Furthermore, there is a lack of publications about “Welcoming Spaces” project, or about the synergies between migration and shrinking regions’ issues. In general, there is a lack of in-depth reflection on migration, integration or initiatives’ long-term goal. Content are purely informative and sometimes slightly positive.

The analysis of media sources shows that the issue of depopulation is framed in the more general processes of suburbanisation. The informative tone, the reference to statistics and the fertility context prevail. However, in the last few years, a slight shift to a more pessimistic view of demography should be highlighted. The topic of migration can be considered a source of divisions expressed through different approaches: on the one hand, the anti-immigrant rhetoric; on the other hand, articles describing the broader context of migration, including the determinants of decision-making, migration policy at EU and national levels, or the benefits of migration for Poland. Recently, a trend of articles are focused on depopulation and migration processes contributing to the depopulation of certain areas, but also on the needs of the Polish labour market met by foreign workers.

Narrative recommendations on migration in shrinking areas and welcoming spaces

Target: Media and Journalists

Measures should be put in place with the objective of providing a deontological and ethical code for journalists, and media in general, for themes such as migration, shrinking areas and welcoming spaces.

The issues driving these narrative recommendations are the following:

1. Which narratives are corrosive against migrants in shrinking areas and welcoming spaces?
2. In what ways are negative narratives and representations of migrants in shrinking areas dangerous and damaging?
3. In what way are migrants’ voices silenced, and how might this be contested?
4. How might negative discourses on migration movement and migrants best be disrupted and contested?
5. How can narrative remain a point of, and for, resistance, to harmful alarmistic narratives and discourses, as well as an intervention in negative perceptions of migrants?
6. How does the media assist in promoting or, alternatively, in changing this rhetoric?

We recommend media organisations and representatives, as well as relevant media associations/institutes, to challenge the specific political (false) narratives that dominate much of the public debate: that migrants pose a risk to national security; that they are a drain on the economies of states; that they are just victims of ignorance about the risks of crossing the borders; and that they are incapable of settling into the cultures of their host communities. The media has the capacity to take a leadership role in actively contributing to a shift in this rhetoric. To this end, we recommend to:

- Conduct media reporting on migration in shrinking areas ethically, with a strong focus on making visible the experiences and realities of what it means to migrate elsewhere (including mobility justice framework and passport index issue);
- Ensure that those with a migratory background are appropriately represented without stereotypization and diversity respected, that is, there is recognition of the need for all migrants to have the opportunity to speak out, irrespective of their age; gender; sexual orientation; education; and linguistic ability, and that there is the acknowledgment of intersectional identities;
- Try always to involve them in news about shrinking area and, especially, in news that are on them: it is neither sufficient nor ethical to speak on their behalf;
- Adopt legally appropriate terms always in order to return to the reader and the user the maximum adherence to the reality of the facts, avoiding the use of improper terms; in addition, overcome fixed categories related to urban-centric perspective (“locals”; “migrants”; “foreigners”) giving instead centrality to relationship and living as an experience of community belonging, for example: long-term, new-term inhabitants/with migrant backgrounds;
- Reformulate deep narratives in a co-construction way from those who inhabit the territories (getting to know each other, in people and stories; experiencing long-time of knowledge; coming out of “times of emergency”);
- Going beyond oppositional and othering logics (urban-rural, us-others) by overcoming urban-centric and Eurocentric points of view by avoiding stereotypization or homologization narratives (taking into consideration historical, economic, political and social territorial inequalities);
- Highlighting gaps in narratives and policies of migration in shrinking areas by producing responsible communication that can be a supporting tool for the existence of new alternative/conjoint narratives and social-political imaginaries;
- Reframe shrinking areas, remote places and remoteness as a collective resource and value for single countries and Europe as a whole; in function of the dynamics related to migration that define these territories as “rural melting

- Avoid dissemination of inaccurate or distorted information, sensationalism, and victimhood in reporting regarding migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. In particular, a reflection is proposed on the damage that can be done by alarmist narratives, which can raise unwarranted alarms, including through improper news associations, to the people who are the subject of news and service; and consequently to the credibility of the entire category of journalists;

- Protect migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and victims of trafficking, who choose to speak with journalists, by taking those precautions regarding identity and image that do not allow for the identification of the person, in order to avoid exposing him or her to retaliation against him or her and family members, whether by authorities in the country of origin, non-state entities, or criminal organizations. In addition, it should be kept in mind that those who come from different sociocultural backgrounds, in which the role of the media is limited and circumscribed, may not be familiar with media dynamics and thus may not be able to assess the full consequences of exposure through the media;

- Provide training on how to interview migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with a proper linguistic support and in a trauma-informed manner;

- Interact, when possible, with experts and organizations, such as Universities, research centers, activists, NGOs, and so on, that specialize in the field, in order to be able to provide the public with information in a clear and comprehensive context that also looks at the causes of the phenomena, not just at the consequences;

- Explore ways for contesting and challenging racism, hate speech, and the proliferation of harmful and untruthful narratives about migrants, asylum seekers and refugee movement, especially through social media and other online platforms;

- Conduct more appropriate research in what constitutes a “welcoming space” and local news should be more accurately present in national news (and viceversa);

- Recounting pilot cases for “welcoming spaces”, but never limited in narrative and representation to these, in order to highlight possibilities and limitations of each case and avoid cosmetic approaches.

Useful links

Carta di Roma: <https://www.cartadiroma.org/>

Reframing Migrants: <https://reframingmigrants.eu/>

Perceptions Handbook: <https://www.perceptions.eu/handbook/>

Ethical Journalism Network (2019a) Checklist for reporting on refugees: <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/checklistreporting-refugees>

CONREP Policy Paper: https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/4231587/CONREP-Policy-Report-3_Narrative_Loughnan-and-Murray_final.pdf

Matilde: <https://matilde-migration.eu/reports-and-policy-briefs/>

The Renaissance of Remote Places MATILDE Manifesto – Edited By Andrea Membretti, Thomas Dax, Anna Krasteva <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003260486>

Manifesto della Piattaforma di Chiusano: <https://www.forumdisuguaglianzediversita.org/la-piattaforma-di-chiusano/>

Manifesto degli Stati generali dell'Appenino: <https://www.slowfood.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/MANIFESTO-APPENNINO3-A3.pdf>

Manifesto di Camaldoli: https://www.lucamercalli.it/ManifestoCamaldoli_aggfirme2.pdf

PHOTOVOICE

Authors (in alphabetical order)

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Introduction

The analysis of the mediatic and political narratives undertaken in the first two parts of this report showed to what extent migration is a stigmatized and fetishized phenomenon. In recent years, moreover, the narrative that criminalises migration, especially that defined as irregular, has taken hold over the humanitarian narrative, which is only revived on the occasion of particular commemorations (such as the Lampedusa massacre) or specific recent events, such as the one that occurred in Cutro, near the Calabrian coast, in March 2023. In cases where positive reception initiatives have been activated, however, given the local scale of most of these initiatives and their dispersion in space and political sensitivity, the imaginaries and narratives they convey remain under-investigated despite many of them having contributed to counter-hegemonic imaginaries on migration (Rygiel & Baban, 2019). Moreover, in many European countries, the narratives regarding migrants in marginalised areas are merely connected to topics such as the asylum seeker reception systems and migrant integration challenges, border security and exploitation of migrants in some economic sectors (Charter of Rome Association, 2020), while little space is left for the local communities living in these areas.

Hence, looking beyond the interpretative mechanics working at the level of the imaginary (Castoriadis, 1997), the third part of this collective research contributed to shape new narratives about welcoming (or unwelcoming) initiatives in shrinkig areas around Europe. By adopting the methodological tools of emotional mapping and photovoice, the aim was therefore to visualising the local perspectives on the world, becoming a transformative tool for those subjects who usually do not have a voice (Couldry, 2010). These visual methods (Nikielska-Sekula, Desille, 2021) were used to investigate the narratives developed by local communities in the Netherlands (Groningen), Italy (Camini), Spain (Talayuela), Poland (Lomza) and Germany (Altenburg). The five case studies selected in the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Spain were inspired by previous research conducted in the “Welcoming Spaces” project and involved both long-term residents and newcomers, due to the willingness to amplify their voice while considering different backgrounds, perspectives and life experiences, as well as to build up a temporary space of sociability at the local level. In particular, the aim was to to visualise and analyse the concepts of “welcoming” and “unwelcoming”, by adopting visual research as a means to co-construct new narratives together with local residents (migrant newcomers and long-term residents).

The key research questions which guide the project are: What are the main narratives related to social innovations that combine migration and local development in shrinking European regions? How is it possible to co-construct alternative narratives on such initiatives together with host societies and newcomers, while simultaneously amplifying their voice? This research gave new insights into three interrelated themes, and specifically: the dynamics and evolution of migration in Europe, moving beyond only the urban context by aiming to understand migration and societal change in marginalised towns and villages; the processes of adaptation, integration and transformation of migrants and receiving societies in European shrinking regions by focusing on the narratives produced local communities; and cultural and political self-understanding of receiving societies and migrants through the co-construction of alternative narratives.

In order to co-construct new narratives on welcoming shrinking areas in the five selected countries, two creative/visual methods were adopted: mapping and photovoice. The method of photovoice was first described by Wang and Burris (1997) to refer to research where images are produced by participants. This meant, during the workshop, to adopt an approach to research with and not on participants. Rather than simply representing human experience, the creative process of photography has developed into another method for understanding (Pink 2006) the perceptions of the participants on the spaces related to their daily experience, the sense of belonging (or not) to the village, their projects for the future and their individual and collective aspirations. Hence, thanks to the photovoice method, an emphasis was given to the collaborative process for co-constructing visual knowledge (Green, Kloos, 2009) on the new communities living in this Italian shrinking area.

The same approach was used thanks to the mapping workshop. Mapping refers to the understanding of the image of a space as an “aggregate of all stimuli” (Lynch, 1960). Lynch, for example, argues how a clear spatial image generates an important sense of emotional security in the person who possesses it, which allows to establish relationships with the world. Moreover, Pezzoni (2013) shifts the attention to the representation of the city by migrants and the meaning of places for the new inhabitants. According to the author, mapping can be transformed into a collective tool for discussion through which to enter into mutual relations, facilitating the feeling of being part of a community.

During the mapping, the guidelines given to the participants were very basic in order not to influence their representation of the village of Camini and to inspire a better understanding of the place in relation to their personal perceptions, emotions and sense of belonging. In particular, the guidelines were the following: Where you live (yellow); places you usually go (blue); places you like most (red); places where you feel good (green); places you

do not like (brown).

As for the data collection, it was focused on different kinds of data, as suggested by Giorgi, Pizzolati, Vacchelli (2021). In particular, the data collected consisted of the notes by the researchers taken during the whole workshop, the maps and the photos developed by the participants, the photos taken by the researchers and the photographer, the notes related to the final collective reflections with the participants and the transcription of the recordings of the workshop. The focuses of these data were mainly three: the relations during the workshops (researchers, societal partner and photographer included), the impact of the process on the participants, and the photos, the maps and the related narratives produced by the participants.

As for the ethics of the research, we adopted the following principles suggested by Wang and Redwood-Jones, (2001): respect for autonomy, promotion of social justice, active promotion of good and avoidance of harm. These principles were not only met during the collection of four different documents signed by the participants (participation in the research, privacy, use of portraits and copyright), but also and foremost by the continuous interactions between researchers and the participants, adopting the approach of research as mutual care (Douglas, 1985).

The societal partners - Colourful het Hogeland, Jungi Mundu, Ocalenie Foundation, CEPAIM, Plattform e.V. and Integratives Zentrum Futura - included in the network are organisations that have a strong local presence in shrinking regions in the five selected countries. They are experimenting with practices of integration and cultural diversity in regional marginalised areas. Their participation in the project was fundamental as they are “gatekeepers” between the researchers and the local community, and facilitators during the workshops.

After having settled the common methodology, the fieldwork consisted in a 2-day workshop. Generally, on the first day the researchers and the societal partners introduced the research and met the participants. For each workshop, between 6 and 11 participants max. have participated, in order to have the time to create a working group. Moreover, they did some preparatory work on the use of cameras together with a local photographer/art school. On the second day, the researchers and the photographer went around the selected village together with the workshop participants, who took pictures about what they consider “welcoming” or “unwelcoming” spaces. In the afternoon, then, all the participants met together with the researchers and the societal partners and talked about their pictures (collective data analysis).

In every country, the researchers together with the local group contacted a photographer/art school who is already working on topics such as migration, human rights, or local/regional development, to collaborate during the workshops and finalise the post-production of 5/6 selected pictures for each country.

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Description of the participants and the workshop

The visual research in Italy took place in Camini (Reggio Calabria province), Calabria, located in Southern Italy. The research has been coordinated by the Department of Sociology and Business Law of the University of Bologna, and specifically by Dr. Melissa Moralli, Prof. Pierluigi Musarò, Dr. Alice Lomonaco, in collaboration with Dr. Chiara Davino. The local partner who helped in the coordination of the workshop was the Jungi Mundu social cooperative from Camini. The organisation “Eurocoop Servizi” of Camini is a social cooperative working in the field of social inclusion, promoting practices of community cohesion, integrated development, socio-professional enhancement. If the municipality of Camini had been affected by a process of depopulation and abandonment, this trend has partially reversed thanks especially to the reception of migrants and the development of different economic and cultural activities. What characterises “Jungi Mundu” (“Unite the world” in the local dialect) reception project is the proliferation of activities supporting schooling and vocational training, including laboratories and workshops in cooking, art, ceramics, baking and tailoring that enhance and recover local traditions. The reception project has also been intertwined with various architectural projects, such as the reconstruction of the village’s houses, the recovery of the cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, local and Syrian cookery courses (with the creation of a bar-restaurant), recovery of land abandoned

by Calabrian migrants through the production organic local products. Moreover, thanks to various fundings, the cooperative developed “Ama-La”, a project aimed at supporting the economic integration of refugee women through the creation of textile handicrafts. The actions promoted by the cooperative for migrants and locals have had positive effects on employment, local services, and influenced international ethical tourism activities (Amnesty International summer camps, yoga retreats, conferences, etc.). By doing this, the cooperative and its reception center became an opportunity for innovation and sustainable development in an area, such as Calabria, which has been for long characterised by a lack of jobs and chronic depopulation.

Thanks to a previous collaboration with the cooperative, the photographer chosen for the workshop was Oreste Montebello, who realised together with Jungi Mundu the project “Sguardi Incrociati”, a workshop on the life of refugees in Camini and a digital exhibition in virtual reality.

The workshop lasted two full days (15-16 March 2022). On the morning of the first day, the researchers introduced the visual research project, the linkages with the Welcoming Spaces project and the aim of the workshop. After this presentation, the participants (researchers and photographer included) introduced themselves, saying their names, their origins, the moment they arrived in Camini and their favourite animal. This moment was particularly interesting in creating a “safe space” environment where everyone felt welcome and started to know better the other participants, the researchers and the photographer. The participants were both older residents and newcomers, here is a short list of how they introduced themselves:

- Fabio Passarelli, 38 years old, was born in Lotri (Reggio Calabria province) and he has always lived in Camini;
- Felisia Passarelli, 24 years old, born in Chiaravalle Centrale (Catanzaro Province). She has come back to Camini two weeks before the workshop took place, after living for five years in other places;
- Mohamed Okla Alokla, 45 years old and in Camini for six years. He comes from Syria.
- Abdul Jabar Wahiai, 45 years old, from Afghanistan. He arrived in Camini with his family three months earlier after being three months in Naples.
- Tony Clwusu, 33 years old from Ganha. He is in Europe for four years and in Camini for one year and three months.
- Manal Mohamed Mofteh, from Libia and in Camini for one year and six months. She is married with four children, two boys, and two girls.
- Rufaeda Ayub, from Syria. She is in Italy for four years and a half and in Camini for two years and a half, together with her family composed of her husband, three daughters, and two sons.
- Chiara Mosciatti, born in 1981 in Camerino (Maerata province). She arrived in Camini in 2020 after living in the Netherlands for several years. She explains that she is doing an art project linked to Camini and she wants to stay in the village because she feels well in this dimension.

On the morning of the first day, there was also another participant who could not attend the rest of the workshop. His name was Zakaria, he is 23 years

old and comes from Syria. He is in Camini for eleven months and in Italy for thirteen months.

After the introduction of each participant, the morning continued with a mapping of the village and the emotions associated with various spaces that were represented by the participants (see explication in section 2). After the drawing of the mapping, the participants explained the meaning of the maps and the spaces represented in front of everyone.

In the afternoon, after a collective lunch, a technical workshop with the photographer Oreste Montebello was scheduled, to do some preparatory work useful to acquire basics information about the use of the cameras, which were given by the cooperative Jungi Mundu since they have already worked on similar projects. The photographer explained some guidelines related to photography and some useful technical tips, in collaboration with Celestino Gagliardi, who works for the Jungi Mundu cooperative. After this front lesson, the participants have been invited to go outside and practice with the camera. One very useful exercise was to take each other portraits in front of the building of the cooperative.

On the morning of the second day, the researchers and the photographer explained again the aim of the workshop and suggested to take pictures connected to the explanation of the places represented the previous morning during the mapping, in order to orient better. In the beginning, the researchers and the photographer went around Camini together with the workshop participants, while in a second moment the participants explored the village alone or in groups. In the second part of the morning, the researcher and the photographer coordinated the selection of five pictures and, then, two pictures among these five. The participants were asked to choose those pictures that they found particularly representative of what they consider “welcoming” or “unwelcoming” in Camini and what they wanted to be part of a new imaginary linked to the village and their life in the village. After eating together, in the afternoon, the participants described in front of everyone the pictures selected and the reason why they believed they represented a welcoming or an unwelcoming space. In the final moment of this second day, all the participants, the photographer and the researchers participated in a collective analysis of the overall workshop experience.

Methodological note

This part of visual research aimed at providing new perspectives to understand the pathways of reception and inclusion of migrants in Italian shrinking areas, with a focus on the village of Camini. In particular, it focused on the dynamics between long-term residents and migrants, aiming at amplifying their voice on non-urban socially innovative initiatives through the co-creation of knowledge on the imaginaries and sense of belonging of these new communities. Hence, the research became a process of “collective learning”, based on

the collaboration between the researchers, the photographer, societal actors, and local inhabitants.

To obtain these results, during the workshop, two creative/visual methods were adopted: mapping and photovoice. The guidelines given to the participants were very basic in order not to influence their representation of the village of Camini and to inspire a better understanding of the place in relation to their personal perceptions, emotions and sense of belonging. In particular, the guidelines were the following: Where you live (yellow); places you usually go (blue); places you like most (red); places where you feel good (green); places you do not like (brown).

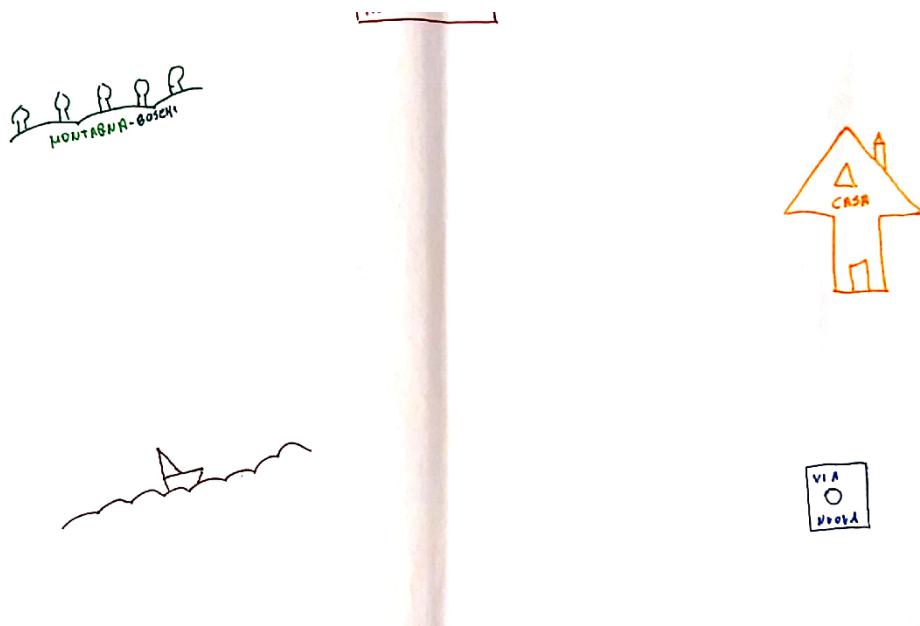
As for the data collection, it was focused on different kinds of data. In particular, the data collected consisted of the notes by the researchers taken during the whole workshop, the maps and the photos developed by the participants, the photos taken by the researchers and the photographer, the notes related to the final collective reflections with the participants and the transcription of the recordings of the workshop. The focuses of these data were mainly three: the relations during the workshops (researchers, societal partner and photographer included), the impact of the process on the participants, and the photos, the maps and the related narratives produced by the participants. As explained in the first part of this report, an important moment was represented by the collective reflections that emerged during the workshop, which gave the possibility to participants to explain the meanings related to the maps they draw and the photos they took. As for the photos, the participants were asked to choose in a first moment five pictures, while in a second moment, they were asked to present two pictures among these five that they considered the most meaningful regarding their own representations of their life in the village and the emotions connected to such places.

The collective analysis of the experience was an important moment to evaluate the results that emerged during the workshop. All the participants, the researchers, and the photographer took part in the collective evaluation of the workshop, answering the following questions: How was the experience? Did you like it? What did you enjoy most? Were there any problems? Would you do it again?

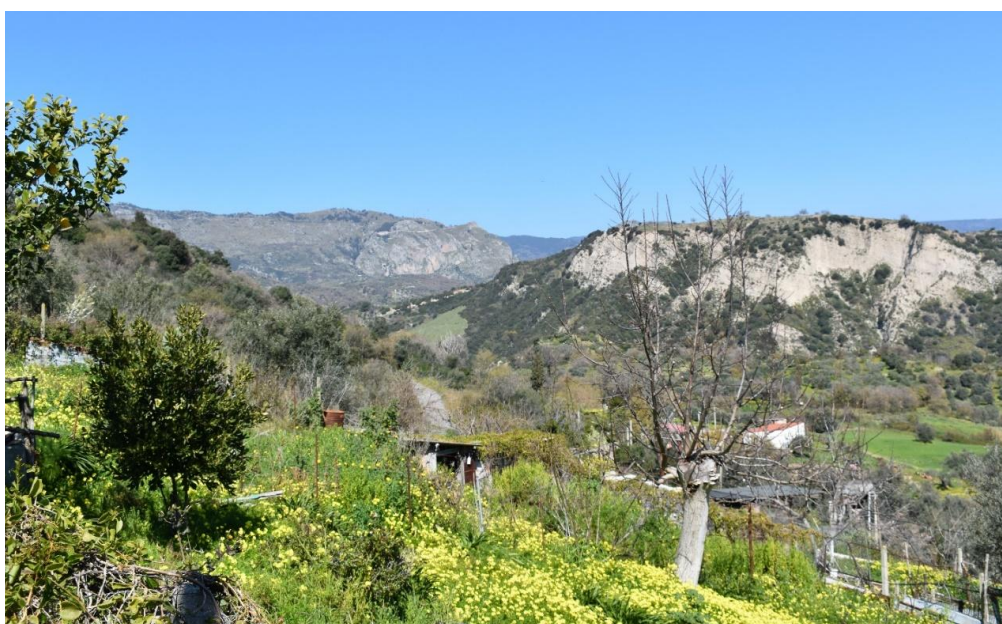
As for the ethics of the research, the following privacy documents were collected: participation to the research, use of personal data and privacy, use of portrait, copyright document. Throughout the research, the team respect the participants' autonomy and avoidance of harm, adopting the approach of research as mutual care (Douglas, 1985).

Brief description of the maps and the photos by the participants

Fabio



In simple terms, the places that I like and make me feel well are the house where I live, via Fontana, and all the territory around the village that I see when I go around with my scooter. I also like our mountains, the greenhouses, Monticella...I always go there on the scooter. The sea: the sea is what I do not like. I do not like it when I have to go up to the beach.



My grandfather's garden

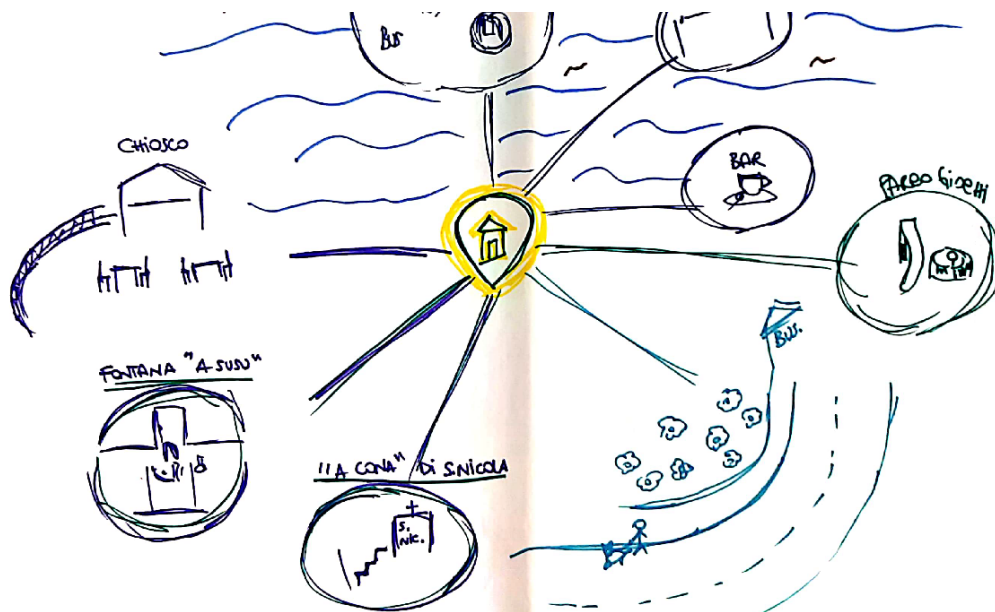
I like this picture because of the mountains. This was my grandfather's garden. And there's the mountain, there are these cliffs, how do you call them? ... "calanchi". This is a place that makes me feel good, I often go there. Unfortunately, now it is uncultivated...



Daily life

This photo is beautiful because there is the peace flag. Then there's the bar. I often go to the bar, every day. Although I prefer the one that is open in summer, in the square. At the bar people come and go, there is always plenty of life.

Felisia



So, the main point is the house where I live, which is the epicenter. Home is what I like, by the way it is also where I live. Then, where I usually go is the new road, the main road where there is the roundabout, with the bus and the benches. The square where the statue is, the bar where I go for coffee and where there are also my old childhood friends who work there. The fountain where there is freshwater, I always like it in the summer... before going to the sea we used to load the bins with water. Then there's also the San Nicola area, which is the one outside the village, which always reminds me of my

childhood when I used to go there with my school friends to chat and joke around. And about the places that make me feel better... the fountain, the many memories of San Nicola, the playground, where I still walk my dog...I used to go there as a child, I always went there with my friends and with my tourist friends when they came here in the summer. And I also feel well in my house. I haven't put a place I don't like, honestly. I've always liked my village, so I don't see anything I don't like about it. Another thing is that from my house and from the village you can see the sea, and I like it a lot.



'A casiceda mia
(my home)

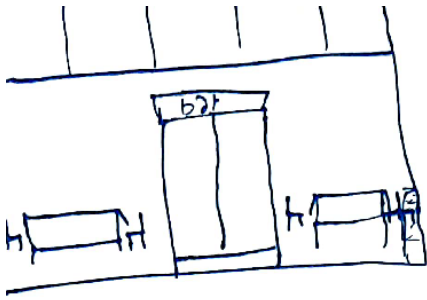
This is simply the door to my house. I wanted to take this photo because this is where I spent my childhood and adolescence, it reminds me of my family. And then there are also many memories in this small alley where a friend of

mine used to come to visit her grandparents. Every Sunday she used to ring my doorbell and we used to stand in front of the door and chat and play... And it reminds me so much of the relief to get home because I had to make a huge climb. This is my home, the place of my heart.



'A chiazza (the square)

This was the square I always stayed as a child because we often went to play there, and it is also close to the home of my grandparents and great-grandparents. So I walked that road every day because every day I went to my grandparents' house. This square also represents a bit of change because when I was little it wasn't like that. There was a stage above and it was completely closed. If I'm not mistaken where the statue is now there was only a simple gate where you entered. When we were children, they always scolded us because we climbed the gate or went down these stairs with bicycles. And in front of the church, there was a small fountain where we played with the water balloons in the summer. And it was thirst-quenching because it was the only source of water available around. This place reminds me so much of my grandparents, the summer spent here with the other children, the tourists...my life as a child in the village.



It's all about home, always. Where do I live? At home. Where is that I usually go? It is always at home. Where do I like it best? It's always home as you see it... Where do I feel good? Always home. And where I do not feel good? Home! (laughs) There is not a big difference. Another place where I usually go is the bar, that little bar you see here. Then there's a mosque that is also in red but is what I would like to change. I hope to have a mosque in the future, it's called like that, yes? There is no brown colour since I hate nothing here...



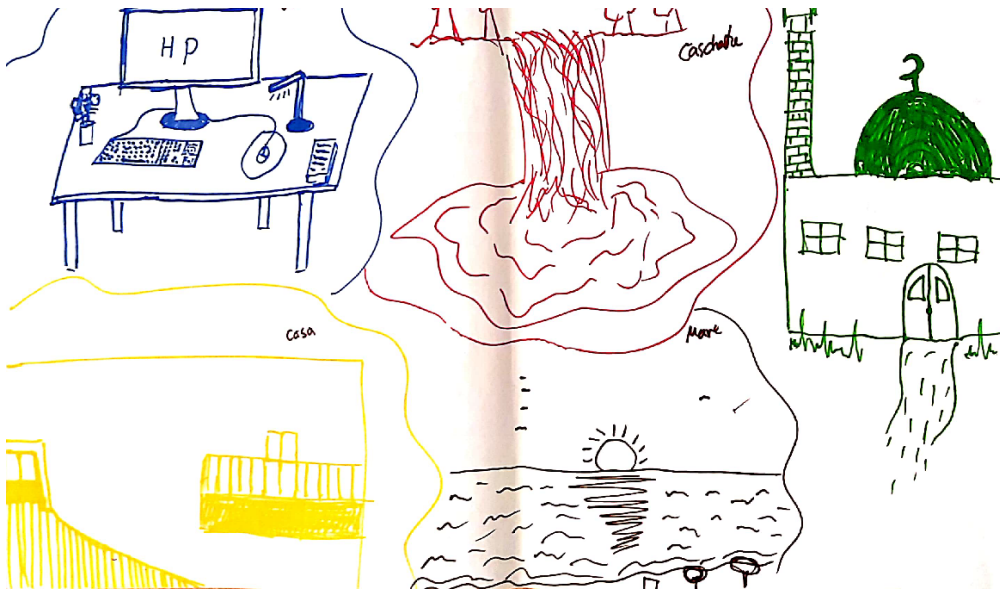
Women of Camini

This picture represents the workshop we did in Camini and some of the people who participated in it. It looks like a collective portrait.



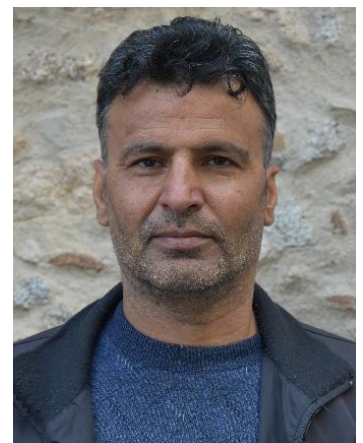
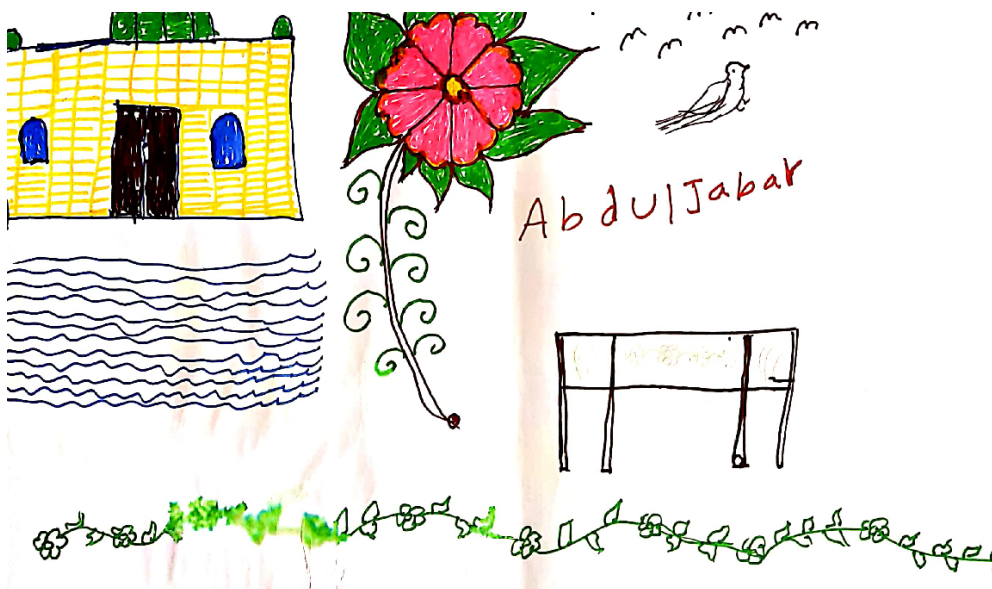
O dai's mom

I like this picture because it is very expressive. I wanted to represent a moment of life in Camini through a complex image that is both vertical and horizontal. The verticality is given by Manal's gaze while the horizontality by the ascending of the stairs.



So, I made the map not only on Camini but on the whole area, because I have lived here for a long time, not a month or a week ... generally where I live is the house of course. My home is close to the municipality where I usually go in my office for working and studying. And the place I like the most is not really in Camini, it's outside: the waterfalls are the place where I usually go with the boys. What I do not like is the sea, there is a story with the sea... for me where I feel better would be to have mosque but there is not, we do not have in Camini. Of course, we do hope that we will have it soon because we are planning it.

Abdul



For me too the mosque would be the place to feel better. And then I draw the desk, that I do not like because this is the place where I have to study.

And then I drew the sun, which represents the energy that can be brought by people.



Bar

This is a photo that gives me peace of mind, because when I go to the bar I see a lot of people and I see that they are all fine. When I see that people are happy, I'm fine too.



Home

I like this photo because it represents the house, and when the weather is good people come out on the balconies. And then it's nice that there are all these trees around. There is also the school nearby, so everything you need...



I've been living in Camini since October 2020 in a beautiful house which is called Casa Venere. It has two entrances and one window so you have to do a lot of stairs to get up there but there are already a lot of openings as soon as you arrive because you get in front of two doors and a big window. My home is beautiful, it has a view of the sea because there are 3 terraces... it feels like you're right on top, you can see the roofs. And the places where I usually go... I go to the Town Hall, often. Let's say that the Town Hall is the place where I've lived the most for my work and to which I've become most attached because it's a good place to live, the atmosphere is really nice. It's a welcoming space, you're comfortable, and there are good relations. The place I like the most is also the river with the waterfalls. I definitely think that what belongs to me most about Camini, in general, are the stairs, these climbs. These stairs belong to me a lot, I feel the stairs are very much my own, they give me the idea that I am conquering the place where I am going. The places where I feel best. So, one of the places I feel best is the 8:40 bus on Saturday mornings. Because everybody's there because we're all going to Caulonia to do the shopping, so it's nice! We all meet there and it's like being in a mobile home. Because the 8.40 bus on Saturdays is our bus. I really feel at home there. The places I don't like are related to my perceptions, and particularly my headache. When I have it, I'm not able to appreciate anything, so the place I don't like is a state of mind.



Self-portrait in March

Stairs are very much part of my imagination. I love jumping stairs, and going uphill. The stairs are a bit of a thermometer of my health because the more I can climb the stairs, the better I am. I like the stairs because they are just a bit like the archer, they are swings on the perspective, more than the climb the stairs bring you a lot of floors and I like this a lot. And then the stairs here are often, indeed almost in all cases, they are taken from the rock and follow the natural slope of the rock of the town. And oh well I took this photo because there are two movements: that of the stairs that go up, and that of the white color that goes down. And for me, this is a moment in which my need for white is very strong, intended both as empty space and as light. And it's also something that represents me right now because it's still cold for me, white also represents cold. There are different levels in this photo that represent me.



Watchful

I like chickens very much. There is the white still returning and then the it is an animal that I respect. It digs, it digs to eat, it feeds on the earth and what is deep underground. And this is also something that represents me a lot. And it is white, it has a white beak in particular. White is basically a suspension, which however does not mean an absence of movement. This is a photo that represents me...If I am in a place in a place, I identify with that place, so I can't separate myself and the landscape, and at this moment I feel to be part of Camini. This photo also represents Camini to the extent that it also represents the closeness of people to animals, with the chicken coop near the house. Here, life circulates above, below, in between. And this thing makes me feel good. The chicken comes out of a picture with her neck, and it is as if it came out of the frame. The fence is the frame of the picture and she has placed the neck inside a rectangle of the net. And then here there is in general the possibility of being so close to animals, it is a luxury that we do not realize nowadays that we are separated from many forms of life, even from the same human beings. That is, this possibility of being in such close contact with other people from other countries, with nature, with animals.



The place where I live is via Montesanto, just up here. This is the field below where I go to play football. The place where I relax is this church when there is nobody nearby. To relax, I also go often to the sea. Instead, I don't like staying in the bar.



Peace and Love
(il Calvario)

I like this "church" of Camini because I feel good when I go there, I can be alone and think. It's a place that makes me feel good, there are no noises but only silence with all the flowers, trees and animals around. It is a good environment and then you can see everywhere of Camini from here, and I like that too. I would call it peace and love because there is no love without peace.



Stadium

This is the field where I go to play football, I really like playing football with friends. But now it is winter and there are fewer people. We also often play football matches with the people of Camini and Riace, with the Jungi Mundu team, the Camini team. My T-shirt number is number 10, but also 7 because it's a lucky number.

Rufaeda



This is my home, where I live. The places where I usually go are the municipality and the bar. The places that I like are in red and are the market and the supermarket where I do the shopping. The places where I feel good are the mountains, the flowers around Camini...I like them a lot. The places I do not like are the sea, and the war either.



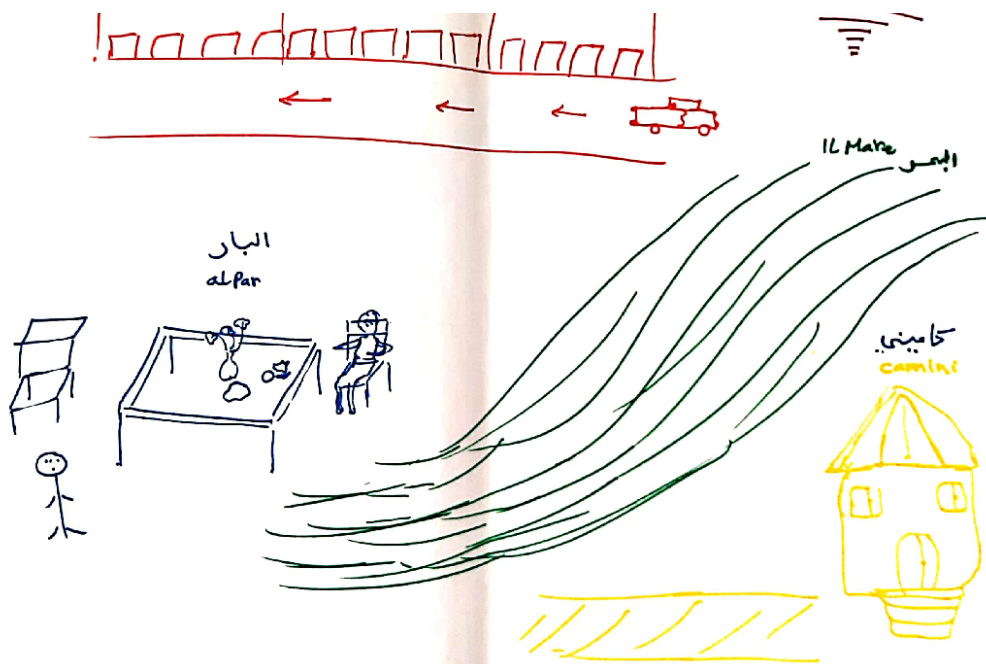
Mountains

There are two things in this photo, with two different colours. The mountain that makes me feel good, which is green. Blue is also a colour I like a lot, but not the sea.



Railing

I like this square because there are so many different houses and a beautiful statue, I do not know its name. And then there's the railing...the railing reminds me of my son who used to work in Syria, then Lebanon and now builds railings in Germany.



I like my home a lot, which is also where I live. I like a lot the bar as well. At the bar there are many people and my friends too. I also feel well at the supermarket, when I am shopping. I like the sea, I do not like the war.



The colour "green"

I really like this photo because you can see the countryside, the nature, even the flock. I often go here on Saturdays or Sundays with my family, first walking along the road and then reaching the countryside.



My life in Camini

This is the picture of all Camini. There are very beautiful colours in the picture, all colours, and there is no war but the peace flag. And then there are the houses for everybody. I also like the mountains in the background and the animals in the farm, I usually go there with my children. This is the image of the village that I saw when I arrived here for the first time.

Analysis of the data

The typologies of welcoming spaces that emerged during the visual research are different. One first interesting dimension could be the presence of both private and public spaces in the depictions made by the participants. On the one hand, the importance of private space, and in particular of the home, emerges as a space not only where to live but where to feel comfortable, especially in the case of some participants such as Mohamed who jokes saying that home can also become an unwelcoming space. On the other hand, the centrality of some external spaces, such as the bar, the countryside or the square, also emerges strongly. These welcoming spaces are therefore spaces of conviviality and sharing, where to meet “friends”, whether they are “childhood friends”, as in Felisia’s case, or “new friends”, as in Manal’s case. Another interesting typology of welcoming spaces concerns movement, which defines the relationship between static and dynamic spaces. Fabio, for example, feels good when he can roam the streets of Camini and the surrounding mountains on his moped, which becomes an individual and mobile form of re-appropriation of space. Fascinating is also the story of the 8.40 am bus that many inhabitants of Camini take on Saturday mornings to go shopping, which according to Chiara is thus transformed into a “mobile home”.

Private and public spaces, whether static or dynamic, thus become fundamental social infrastructures for the inhabitants of Camini and are capable of concretising the emergence of new intercultural communities through meaningful relationships and social connections (Klinenberg, 2018). From the descriptions that accompanied the maps and photographs, in fact, these social infrastructures have functioned as relational boosters. Among these social infrastructures there are certainly the morning bus, the football field, the playground, the Strada Nuova (new street), the fountain, the church square. In a somewhat original way, the town hall seems to be a social connector too, where “everybody is really nice”, as Chiara suggests. The town hall is also a place where people can go “to study and work”, as Zakaria does almost everyday. But the place that in Camini creates the main occasions for strengthening community ties between newcomers, older residents, and returnees is the bar. The only bar of the village, managed by the cooperative Jungi Mundu, is the propelling centre of social life for almost everyone. It is at the bar that Felisia passes by to say hello to her childhood friends, it is at the bar that Mohamed goes to play cards, it is at the bar that Fabio drinks his coffee in the morning, it is at the bar that Manal and Rufaeda feel good and can go and chat after picking up their children from school.

The bar then moves in the village according to the seasons. In winter, the bar is located inside an enclosed building, while in summer it moves to the square in front of the Camini town hall, surrounded by several trees, accompanied by the overpowering song of the birds (so loud that sometimes it almost seems to come from a speaker) and with a beautiful view of the wild coastline of the Ionian Sea. In other words, during the summer, this square becomes a point of encounter between different generations, cultures and stories. Moreover, different events are organised in this public space, such as the Friday evening barbecue, football matches, cultural exchange events through the food that the cooperative organises, weddings, all occasions for supporting the relation in this small intercultural village. If the social function of the bar remains more or less the same, its structure changes according to the seasons, to different temporalities.

A temporality that emerges disruptively also in the participants’ visual narratives, and which refers both to nostalgia for the past and to expectations towards the future. The nostalgia for the past emerges disruptively in the stories of Felisia, who returned to Camini after several years of living away from home. And with her, memories of her grandparents, her childhood friends, the doorbell, playing with water at the fountain and riding her bicycle down the stairs above the church have returned. A nostalgia that also returns in the photo of Fabio, who has always lived in Camini, but who remembers his grandfather’s vegetable garden, now uncultivated. And along with the photo, it emerges the desire to change that place, to revive it, to recultivate it, not to leave it abandoned. The desire for change and transformation also appears in the maps and stories of Mohamed, Zakaria and Abdul Jabar. All three speak of their aspiration to have a mosque in the village, which is represented on their maps in the colour “green”. In short, an imaginative place towards the future where they can feel well and improve their sense of belonging to Camini.

Another theme that emerges strongly in the participants’ narratives is that

of the environment. An environment that can be experienced individually, in search of peace and silence, as in the case of Tony or Chiara, or a nature that is experienced collectively, often with one's family or friends. The view of the Manal countryside, for example, was photographed from a road where "in the evening, at sunset, it is common to meet family groups who are walking" says Oreste. If mountains, the landscape and the countryside seem to fascinate most of the participants, this is not the case for the sea. The sea is sometimes seen as a space that provides well-being, sometimes as a space associated with negative feelings ("something happened there"), fear, war. The war that breaks out beyond the horizon, which is not so far away, and which for some of the participants was also the cause of their journey to Camini. The image of war is fought and strategically contrasted by the images constructed by the participants. In fact, two of them, Manal and Fabio, chose to represent the flag of peace, which in this context has an even more dense and profound meaning. But the image of peace also returns, perhaps more indirectly, in the imagery proposed by Abdul Jabar, who has recently arrived from Afghanistan and is happy "if he sees other people feeling well".

In fact, thanks to a crossover between visual elements (maps and photographs) and storytelling, the research also brought out hidden results, which were difficult to understand from the outset. Rofaeda, in fact, does not choose the photo of the square of the church of Camini on the basis of what might be the most obvious elements (the square, the statue, the stairs, the church), but for an element that might seem secondary from a visual point of view, but which instead turns out to be symbolically central for her. The railing in the square, in fact, reminds her of her son who now lives in Germany, building railings. These are subtle threads that probably only this type of method has allowed to unveil, thanks to the accessibility of their tools and the easiness of exchange compared, perhaps, to direct interviews.

Moreover, the co-construction of knowledge during the research took place not only through the sharing of reflections with the participants, but also with the photographer himself, who already knew Camini and some of the people who took part in the workshop. Everyone, therefore, collaborated in the interpretative process, combining visual narratives and storytelling, personal stories and new spatial relations of belonging.

Final discussion and co-evaluation

The co-construction of the narratives together with the inhabitants of Camini through mapping and photovoice helped to bring out different imaginaries with respect to the emergence of new intercultural communities in this Italian shrinking area. Italian rural areas, particularly in the last decade, have also been the site of processes of re-spatialisation and re-territorialisation of migration (Corrado, 2017). For example, they have gone from being places of traditional emigration into "new areas of immigration" (McAreavery, 2017). These processes of re-spatialisation of migration in fragile areas have generated a change in the dynamics of engagement between residents,

institutions and the local economy. In this context, these two visual methods were able to bring out stories, memories, relationships, imaginative capacities, emotions, which provided some narratives constructed collectively by the workshop participants, the photographer and the researchers, through a process of collective learning. The welcoming spaces or unwelcoming spaces that emerge are of a different nature and cover different spatial and temporal levels. Static spaces alternate with dynamic spaces, spaces of the past with spaces of the future, anthropic spaces with natural spaces, spaces made of relationships and spaces made of silence, where people feel to identify, like in Chiara's story. But the visual elements also create connections even further back in time and space, with the sea, the war, Germany, Libya, Syria, the grandfather's vegetable garden or the old games of the village children. In this way, the visual becomes not only a way of representing reality, but also a place where aspirations, imaginative capacities, and possibilities for the future emerge, as in the case of the desire to create a mosque.

These voices were amplified through the use of simple tools, such as drawing with markers of different colours or using the camera in automatic mode, and managed to create complex meanings through an alternative reading of space and the participants' relations with the village. These tools, moreover, were able to overcome those language barriers that often hinder dialogue, opening up imaginative glimpses and memories of the past and present, which were unlocked thanks to the creation of a "safe place" where everyone felt represented, as emerges in the co-evaluation part of the experience.

During the co-assessment, in fact, all participants were enthusiastic about the experience, both from a relational point of view and from the point of view of learning new knowledge related to photography and images. Although, of course, we have to take social desirability into account, the participants' satisfaction was also seen during informal moments, such as shared meals at the restaurant. While on the first day not everyone came, on the second day all the participants shared lunch and the happy hour that followed the last session, bringing also their friends and families. These moments, together with the workshop itself, were therefore important moments of relationality and were able to create opportunities for exchange and informality that will go beyond the temporariness of the project itself. Moreover, the workshop itself was considered by some inhabitants as a positive experience that proved the possibility to participate in cultural events even in a small village such as Camini.

Besides the relational dimension, another crucial aspect that was able to overcome the ephemerality of the project is, indeed, the narrative one. If the aim of the project was to co-construct a "third imaginary" on migration and shrinking areas, the maps, the photographs and the participants' testimonies expressed this tendency very well. These narratives were also amplified by the presence of Rai Calabria, part of the national news network, which took an interest in the project and came to interview researchers, photographers and participants. In this way, the transformative power of the experience was multiplied, showing an alternative imagery of the everyday life of these new rural communities. To conclude, through collective learning and doing, the visual research represented an opportunity to understand that revitalisation can also be conceived through the discursive dimension.



Description of the participants and the workshop

Background information on the village of Bedum and the municipality Het Hogeland

Bedum is a village in the municipality Het Hogeland, located in the north-east of the Netherlands. Until 2019, Bedum had its own municipality which merged with others to form the municipality Het Hogeland ('the highland'). In terms of surface area, this municipality is the second largest in the country and it includes over 40 villages. It stretches from the coastal Wadden Sea wetlands in the northwest and the industrial Eemshaven port in the northeast to open grasslands with winding dikes and Romanesque old churches in the south. Typical for Bedum is its leaning tower in the centre of the village and the ornamented brick buildings inspired by the Amsterdam school of architecture. The dark and red bricks are a testimony to the region's once flourishing brick industry and its fertile (sea) clay soil. Today, besides being a tourist destination, there are ever increasing concerns about the series of earthquakes that hit the region as a result of extraction from the Groningen gas field for decades. This Groningen gas controversy regularly features in national political debates and media and has become a symbol of the peripherality of non-urban localities that are geographically far away from the Hague, the Dutch political centre. Many of the smaller villages in the region are experiencing a declining or ageing population, while some located closer to the city of Groningen are expanding.

In comparison to other villages in the region Bedum has maintained basic services and it is well-connected to public transport. This is also one of the reasons why the community organisations like Colourful Het Hogeland often organise events and activities in Bedum. Initiatives like Colourful Het Hogeland are what make Bedum and Het Hogeland special: grassroots initiatives to build welcoming spaces with residents and not simply for old residents and newcomers in the region. Colourful Het Hogeland breaks down barriers between groups usually separated. Currently, the initiative works together with former newcomers to welcome refugees from Ukraine. Moreover, its events have historically also been an important platform for encounters across difference and for migrant communities to self-organise.

The municipality Het Hogeland, while small in terms of population size when compared to Dutch averages, is at the forefront of national debates on asylum governance and the reception of forced migrants. Het Hogeland was the only Dutch municipality to open a temporary first reception transit centre for asylum seekers in the village of Zoutkamp. It is also one of the few Dutch municipalities that provide temporary housing facilities for evacuated (recognised) refugees from Afghanistan. In addition, there are various shelters for displaced persons from Ukraine. This proactive approach of the local government, mayor and community responses regularly feature in national media. These local efforts to help the failing national reception system were also recognised by regional and national political actors, such as the minister of migration.

The mayor often cites the strong local (community) support to forced migrants to argue that the municipality and residents are offering a helping hand to the national government, while the latter overlooks the precarious position of households affected by earthquakes and the dire financial situation of the municipality. The municipality offers (financial) support to initiatives such as Colourful Het Hogeland, but municipal actors fear it will be hard to continue financial support and foster popular support due to these broader financial concerns. It is against this backdrop that initiatives such as Colourful Het Hogeland emerged and under these socio-political and economic conditions that local community actors organise activities.

Local partner and programme

The photo workshop was co-organised with our local partner Colourful Het Hogeland and accompanied by researchers Sara Miellet & Bianca Szytniewski. Being an active community organisation, Colourful approached potential participants in the municipality, suggested a local photographer and arranged the location of the workshop – the municipal library in Bedum. The workshop took place on 8 and 9 July 2022 and the programme was organised as follows:

Day one: Friday 8 July

- Start of the programme and introductions – Introduction of the photo workshop and its aims, getting to know each other and the photographer, explaining the consent forms.

- Mapping exercise – A short explanation of the mapping exercise, feelings and emotions related to different colours.
- Photography workshop – a practical workshop on taking pictures with a professional camera, including tips and tricks on composition, light, landscape photography, portraits etc.
- Photo activity in Bedum – In small groups all participants walked around Bedum and took pictures with the following questions in mind: What are places in Bedum – associated with the words welcoming or unwelcoming – you would like to capture in an image?

Day two: Saturday 9 July

- Selection and discussion of pictures – in small groups participants selected to pictures and explained their choice to each other and the researcher. Participants also were asked to write down a caption for the photo exhibition.
- Photo shoot – Portraits were taken and participants could do a short photoshoot alone or with their family.

Description of participants

In total we had twelve participants in the workshop, mostly women and a few men. Our partner organisation Colourful Het Hogeland took the lead of finding and inviting participants. It turned out that in the previous months, a temporary shelter for Ukrainian refugees had been organised in the municipality and the Ukrainian newcomers were interested to join the workshop.

- Mother and daughter from Ukraine: (1) Alona and (2) Valerie arrived in the Netherlands in 2022
- (3) Noëlle – born in the Netherlands; Moluks roots
- (4) Yemane & Mezgebo – couple from Eritrea
- Family from Ukraine: daughters (5) Polina (13 years old), (6) Vitalina (30 years old) and Mira, and their mother (7) Svetlana (48 years old), arrived in the Netherlands in 2022
- (8) Hanna (17 years old) – from Eritrea
- (9) Rayane (19 years old) – from Benin
- (10) Al Fath (16 years old) – from Indonesia
- (11) Lana (40 years old) – born in Ukraine; arrived in the Netherlands in 2022
- (12) Marcela (69 years old) – from Slovakia; living in the Netherlands already for a decade

Overview of the information

- Local research team: Sara Miellet and Bianca Szytniewski
- Local partner: Colourful Het Hogeland
- Photographer: Peter Russchen
- Participants: Alona, Valerie, Marcela, Noëlle, Svetlana, Vitalina, Polina, Mira, Lana, Rayane, Hanna, Al Fath, Yemane, Mezgebo

- Special thank you to: Wahabou Alidou, Marlies Meijer, Alberto Alonso-Fradejas, Suus Tehupuring, and Marcela and Stefan for translating for us.

Methodological note

In this two-day photo workshop together with the locals – both newcomers and long-term residents, we delved into the following questions and explored how locals see their village: What makes the place where you live welcoming and how would you capture this in an image? For this purpose, two research methods were used: mental mapping and photovoice.

Mental mapping exercise

Participants were asked to draw a map according to the following colours. The map could be cartographical but also made of symbols or drawings of places they associate feelings of welcoming or unwelcoming. During the mapping exercise, the researchers walked around and asked additional questions to better understand the mental maps.

Waar je woont	GEEL
Plekken waar je vaak komt	BLAUW
Favoriete plekken	ROOD
Plekken waar je je goed voelt	GROEN
Minder fijne of minder favoriete plekken	BRUIN

Some methodological notes concerning this mapping exercise:

- Bedum, the village where the photo workshop took place, is part of the municipality Het Hogeland, which includes over 40 villages which are scattered around the space. Some of the participants lived in one of the villages nearby or just outside of the village borders, as was the case with for the Ukrainian newcomers.
- Our Ukrainian participants were very new to the village and the Netherlands. Their associations were also influenced by this newness of being in a new country.

In small groups, all participants walked around Bedum and took pictures with the following question in mind: When thinking about Bedum and welcoming and unwelcoming spaces, what would you like capture in an image? Additionally, we gave the participants a couple of reminders when taking pictures in the village: 1) to think of the tips and tricks on composition, light, landscape photography, portraits etc. provided by the photographer; 2) to think of the mapping exercise and their own maps; and 3) to think about what they would like to show to others not living in this municipality but living in other parts in the Netherlands or in another country.

Role of the researchers and ethics

As researchers, we took a facilitating role throughout the workshop, guiding the participants through the steps and asking questions to understand their choices. We ensured the participants that our role is to guide them through the process and that we respect their choices on selecting the pictures of the photo book and exhibition. At the beginning of the workshop, we took the time to explain the consent forms, including the participants' consent to take part in the workshop, and to use their portraits and photos in both the digital book and the photo exhibition. The participants were asked to sign these consent forms and a copy of the consent form was given to them on the second day. The consent forms were explained in English and Ukrainian by our translator.



Group picture



Group picture

Brief description of the maps and the photos by the participants

Photographer: Peter Russchen - Photo selection and title



[Bedum - picture by Peter Russchen (photographer)]
Title: Bedum, a village
alongside a canal



[Welcoming space - picture by Peter Russchen (photographer)]
Title: 'Bedumer Bos': A forest to find calmness

Valerie



Beauty is in the details



[Poem for both selected pictures:]
Beauty is in the details,
Keep a balance,
Look around,
look inside yourself.
After all, eternity freezes
in moments.

Alona





A whitewashed house
with hollyhocks

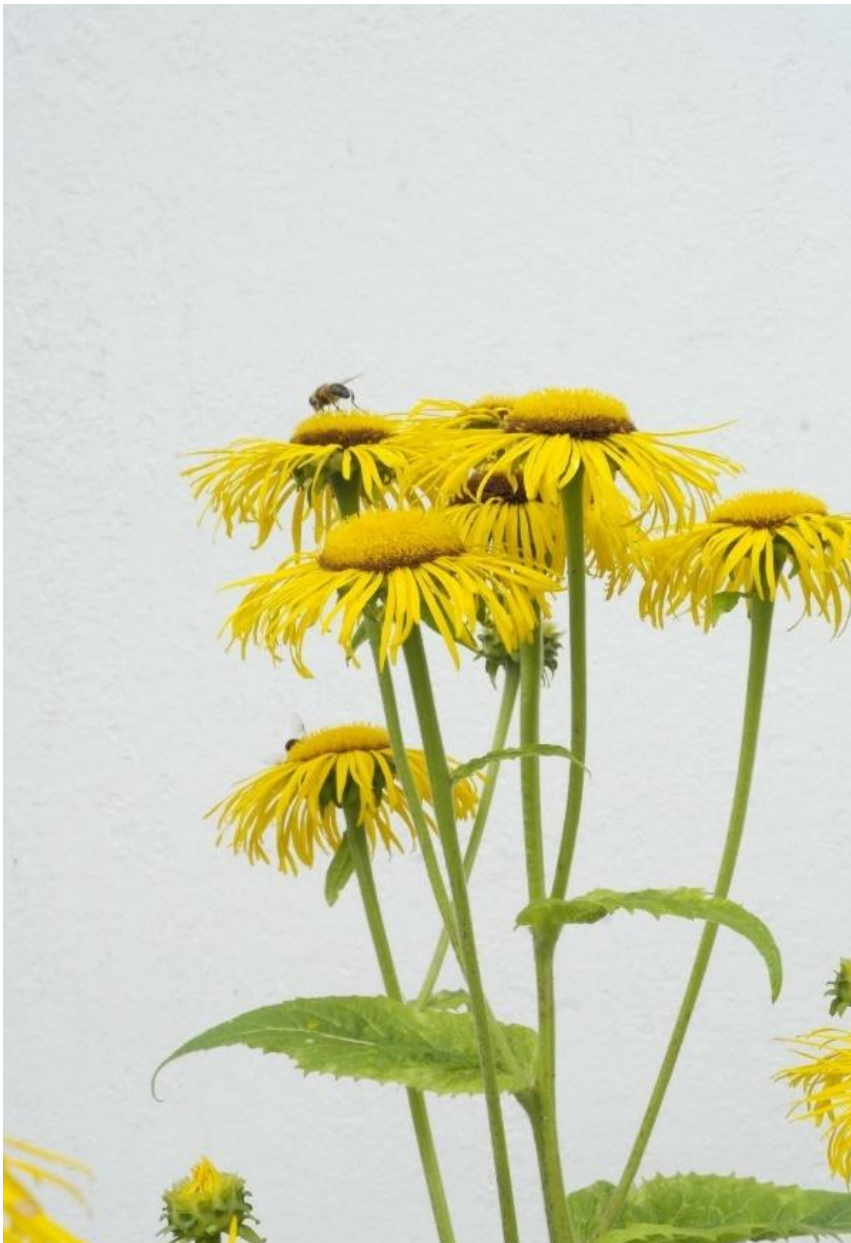
The houses and the hollyhocks which are blooming near the house - words from a Ukrainian song. A whitewashed house, the hollyhocks, everything makes it seem Ukrainian. Our history. It takes my thoughts back to the past. My soul feels warm and good. Now with these difficult times in my home country and being in a foreign country, seeing the same picture gives me warmth. I feel at home.



Future

A photo of my daughter. The ease of photography, the ease of walking. She is walking down the street, everything is ahead: life, opportunities, future.

Noëlle



Captured by nature

I am very proud of this picture with the bees. You can nicely see the bee on top of the flower. I took the picture with the white wall on the background, so it looks as if it is a painting.



Every piece of nature consists of something beautiful

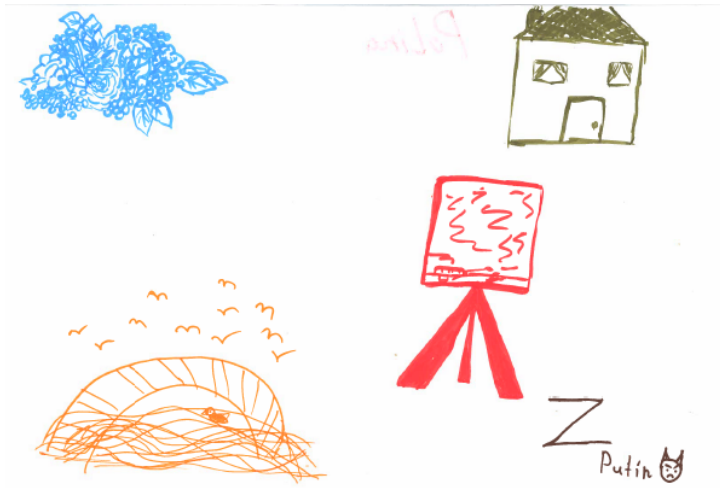
We spend a lot of time in the forest nearby - 'Bedummer bos'. This was the first green thing I saw outside. Most of the time, I am outside in the forest, at home or in Groningen.

Yemane and Mezgebo



School

I chose this picture because one of my favourite places is our children's school.



Syringa

I like the colours and the shape of this flower. This flowery plant is new to me, but I associate it with a flower in Ukraine. This flower reminded me of the flowers of the Sering plant (Syringa) which has a nice scent.

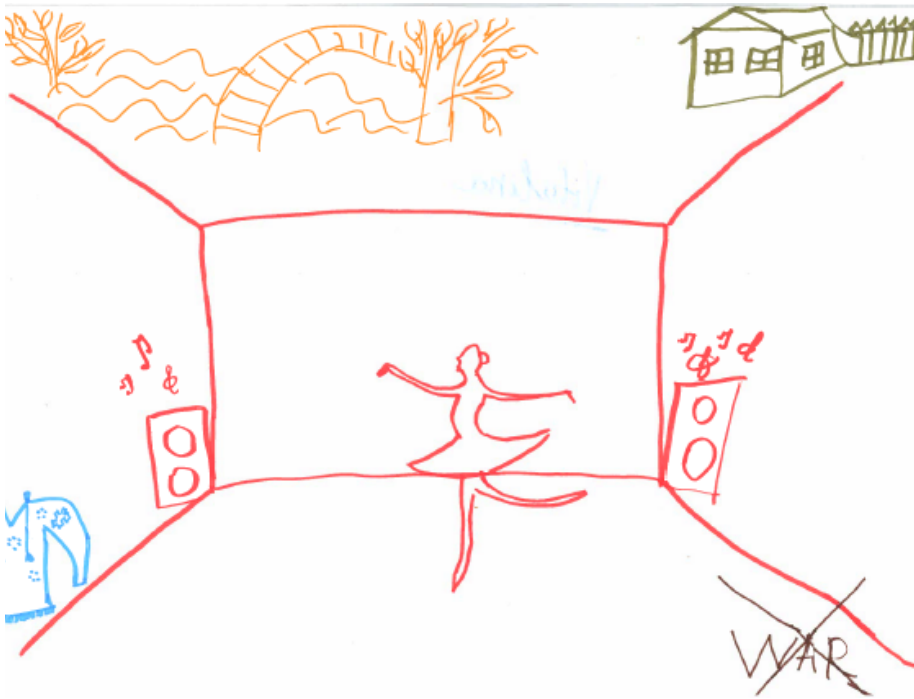


Home

This picture was taken by my younger sister Mira. I chose it because I feel sad when I think of my home in Ukraine. I miss it. This picture was taken on the bridge over the canal in the village here.

Svetlana's (mother) reflections: I feel so good when I see the Ukrainian flag. It is a little part of home here. I am happy that people in the Netherlands support and invite us, it is really important.

Vitalina



Balance

I took this picture because I like nature and in this picture the contrast and combination of the green and pink colours with the water is so peaceful. I took it standing on the bridge in Bedum. In Ukraine we do not have this flower so

this is something new and beautiful, something different from what we have in Ukraine.

Svetlana's (mother's) reflections:

I like this picture because in Ukraine you cannot see this kind of nature. We don't have lotus flowers..

Svetlana



The poppy and the lotus

I chose this picture because the poppy flower is a symbol of Ukraine, where it is called Mak. The poppy is our symbol, and the lotus, for us this is something new, symbolic for the Netherlands with all the water. So in this picture, which was taken by my daughter Vitalina, you can see these two worlds coming together through the flowers, the poppies in the front and the lotus on the water in the back.



"I am who I am and that is exactly who I want to be"



Life

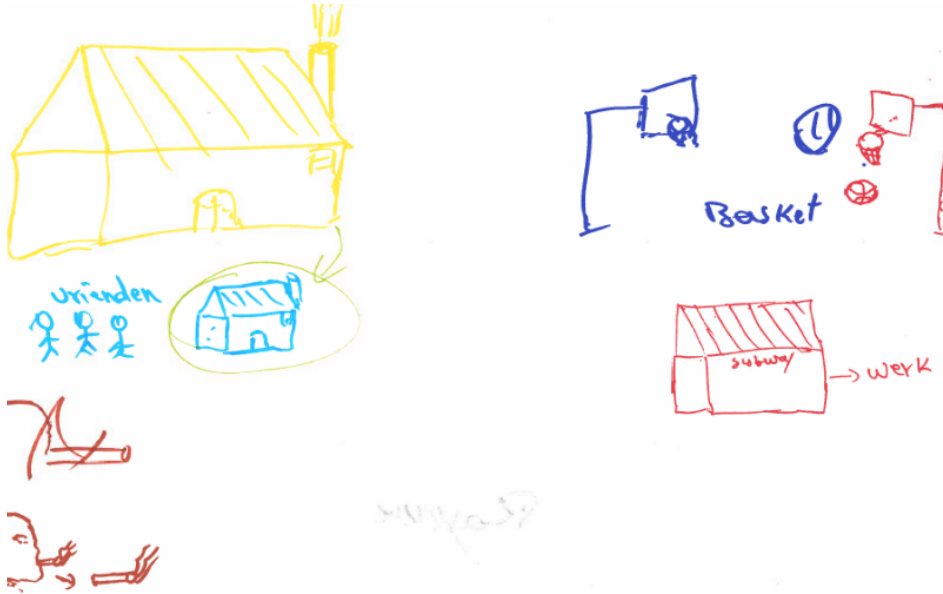
Life is short
Time runs fast
Not again
No rewinding
So enjoy life as it comes



A home is no home
without love

Even if you have left your country, no matter the reason, you can feel at home elsewhere through love. If you receive enough love, you'll feel safe. I chose this picture because of the trees and the church to show that people can feel at home in many places.

Rayane



A Picture within a picture

A flower. What I really like about this picture is the photographer in the background, my friend Al Fath. You can't see him very clearly, but it gives depth to the picture. I always like it when I take a picture of someone who takes a picture of me at the same time. In the background you also see the street with the church. I go there often, it is on my route to the basketball court and I like this area. My favourite places in Bedum? The basketball court. What else, ehm, I don't know, I don't do so many things in Bedum. I'm always in

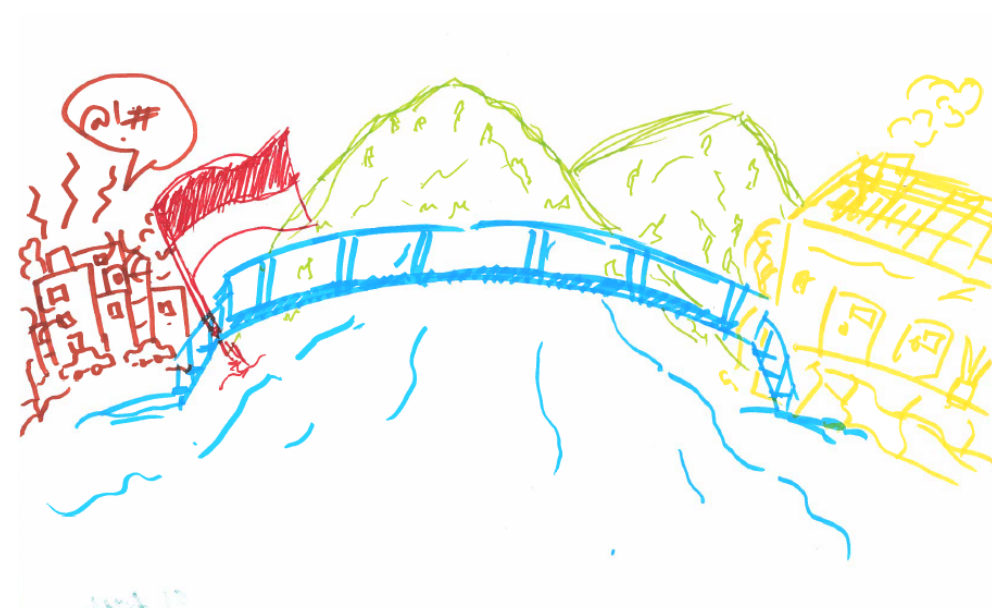
Groningen. The Noorderplantsoen, that is my favourite place in Groningen. They also have a basketball court there and I always meet new people there. Some of these people are really professional in basketball, so I learn a lot from them. I like that. The same goes for my work. I have nice colleagues, it is always fun. In Groningen we often take pictures with our friends.



Paris in Bedum

I like the houses behind the trees and the river as well. In the lower part of the picture everything is green, while the sky is so blue. The roofs of the houses also have a slight blue colour, so I think this is a nice combination in this picture. I call this street the Paris of Bedum. There are all these beautiful houses there, I like everything about this street. Paris, because the houses are so beautiful and clean there.

Al Fath





Reach



Concentrate



Poppies at the waterside

I really had to bend down to take this picture. The poppies in front - our country's symbol - and the water [of the canal] in the background. It is as if I am watching a painting. I put my whole soul into making such a small picture. You can really feel that you are there at the waterside.



Everything comes together

This is my favourite picture. It reflects my whole soul. The beauty of nature, the beautiful clouds, the towers of the church, a river and flowers. You can see the tower is tilted. The photo is very unusual, it has everything.

Marcela



Marcela





Spokojnosť na duši
(piece in the soul)

I chose this picture because when looking at it, I feel peace. The green colour of the grass, the many colours of the flowers - it catches my eye. I also love the house. For me, this is a beautiful place.



Zrkadlo neba
(Mirror of the sky)

I see the water as a mirror of the sky. The Netherlands are known for their canals. We have mountains but here everything is flat and divided in pieces through the canals and water. I often walk here.

Analysis of the data

Maps

When discussing the mapping exercise, some participants who were not so new in the municipality also included their activities in the city of Groningen. The youngsters among the participants had their school and sports activities in Groningen, and two participants noted that they visited the Mosque or Eritrean orthodox church in Groningen on a regular basis. Bedum is well-connected to Groningen by rail and bus.

As noted earlier, our participants from Ukraine had just fled the war in their home country. This influenced their reflections on welcoming and unwelcoming spaces. This is also visible in their maps. Unwelcoming was linked to Putin or the war in Ukraine, and welcoming to Bedum where they currently found shelter but also to memories of the past, such as being a dancer (Vitalina) or making music (Valerie).

Welcoming versus unwelcoming

Reflections on welcoming and unwelcoming spaces were twofold. On the one hand, they were very specific in relation to the village Bedum and its surroundings, in particular the natural environment and green and blue spaces. Many participants took nature-related pictures – also our photographer choose a picture of a tree found in the forest next to Bedum. Blue and green were the colours that were often found in the maps as well as in the pictures. Concerning the descriptions, participants associated these images with calmness, peace and beauty.

On the other hand, the reflections on Bedum were composed in relation to the larger city of Groningen – thus a more regional experience of space. Overall, life in Bedum and the nearby villages was appreciated by the participants as nice and peaceful, but their daily lives also took place beyond the village as previously mentioned. Their stories highlight how their evaluation of Bedum is connected to their sense of identity and self-understandings in Groningen and other places, such as their hometowns. In some cases, participants explained their appreciation of Bedum with reference to Groningen, arguing that Bedum complements the city life of Groningen and vice-versa.

Connection to places of home – memories, places, values, family

While many pictures represented (symbols from) the Netherlands – water, flowers, trees, green spaces, many of the newcomers took pictures of places and objects that remembered them of places of home. Alona's white washed houses or the poppy flowers in the pictures taken by Alona and Svetlana are

examples of this. Moreover, family and friends turned out to be an important theme too. Various participants selected a picture that depicted their family member – daughter or sister (pictures by Vitalina and Alona)– or a close friend playing with a basketball or taking pictures (pictures by Al Fath).

An additional association found in the pictures can be linked to the youth as the future. Yemane and Mezgebo took a picture of a school as an important place for their children and their future, whereas Alona took a portrait picture of her daughter walking into her future life full of opportunities.

Final discussion and co-evaluation

Some final reflections about the workshop in the Netherlands concerned the following:

- For many of our participants the workshop was a way to get engaged in an activity with others. A large part of our participants had fled the war in Ukraine. They had arrived a few months or weeks earlier. There was a mother with her three children that participated, a mother and her daughter and one woman (her husband could not join the workshop), who all lived in the same shelter. The workshop was a way to do something creative and leave the war in Ukraine in the background. We had a bias through the overrepresentation of Ukrainian nationals and women joining the workshop.
- The municipality Het Hogeland covers many villages. The workshop took place in Bedum, and although most participants lived in Bedum, some also lived in another village close by. Together with the fact that many of our participants were quite new to Bedum, Het Hogeland and the Netherlands, the selected pictures and discussions say more about the experiences of the participants than they say about the locality/place itself. This is also visible in the maps. None of the participants drew a cartographical map of Bedum.
- Overall, during the workshop, there was a relaxed atmosphere. Some of the participants knew each other and took up the activity together. They enjoyed the tips and tricks given by the photographer and experienced taking pictures with a professional camera as something fun to do.



Description of the participants and the workshop

The visual research in Poland took place in Łomża, a middle-sized city of circa 63.000 inhabitants, located in the Podlaskie voivodeship, in North-East Poland. Until 1999, it was the capital of the region but after an administrative reform, it lost its administrative status. This was the beginning of the economic and social decline of the city: since this moment it has started depopulating, and the community is aging. Young people are leaving Łomża, looking for better education and job opportunities.

Łomża used to host a reception centre for asylum seekers until 2010, and nowadays around 60 Chechen families live there. Moreover, since 2014 some Ukrainians, mostly men without families started to live and work in the city. But the situation changed dramatically on 24 February 2022, when the full-scale war in Ukraine started. Many Ukrainian women with children moved to Łomża and started to live there. What is unique about Łomża, is the presence of a local NGO encouraging intercultural dialogue and hospitality, from education to housing, from job opportunities to other forms of active support for diverse communities and groups.

The workshop lasted for two days (11-12 June 2022) and took place in the headquarters of our societal partner - Ocalenie Foundation and saw the participation of Joanna Zuzanna Popławska (SGH, Warsaw School of

Economics) and Dominik Wach (SGH, Warsaw School of Economics). It began with a short description of the rules (a contract) regarding ways of communication and working methods for which all participants agreed. An important part of the contract and this part of the workshop was to ensure participants are in a “safe space” where everyone is welcome and can have different, but valuable points of view. We ensure participants that we will not assess their choices and opinions and that there are no good or bad reflections. Participants received a schedule of the workshop. Later, the researchers started a round of introductions and asked all participants (including a photographer and students from PJATK) to do the same. Participants were encouraged to describe themselves by saying their names, their origins, the moment they arrived to Łomża, and also something which defines themselves personally (e.g. family status, hobby) and professionally (e.g. education, occupation, skills). Moreover, they were encouraged to tell something about their migration experiences.

Representatives of SGH presented the ‘Welcoming Spaces’ project and the linkages with the photovoice workshop and the aim of the workshop. The workshop took place according to the following agenda:

11 June 2022

- Presentation of the “Welcoming Spaces” project and the photovoice workshop, aim of the workshop, and presentation of agenda
- Presentation of the participants, stories about personal migration experiences
- Mapping session. A short explanation of the idea of mapping, feelings, and emotions we would like to capture on the maps
- Coffee break
- Comments to the maps. Each participant was explaining the maps he has drawn, there was a short discussion about Łomża as a city to live in.
- Collective lunch
- Lesson on photography, collection of ethical documents and portraits

- Photovoice session part I. 4 participants of the workshop together with a student (who was technical support) went to Łomża due to make photos.

12 June 2022

- Photovoice session part II. 4 participants of the workshop together with a student (who was technical support) went to Łomża due to make photos
- Selection of two pictures. Each participant had their own computer and had a while to select a picture he would like to be shown in an exhibition.
- Collective lunch
- Presentation of 2 pictures for each participant. Each participant explained his choice, there was a short discussion over each photo
- Collective evaluation of the workshop

8 participants took part in a workshop: 4 Polish (3 women, 1 man), 2 Ukrainian women, and 2 men from Chechenya. They were chosen to take part in the workshop by our societal partner, Ocalenie Foundation. Due to achieving diversity of the participants, Ocalenie Foundation has chosen them according to the following features: nationality, duration of stay in Łomża, family status. In a result, the following participants took part in the workshop:

- Joanna – 49 years old, she was born in Poland, and always lived in Łomża.
- Klaudia – 19 years old, was born in Łomża, Poland, graduated high school and will apply to university.
- Magdalena – 40 years old, was born in Łomża, Poland, she lived for almost 7 years in Warsaw where she studied. She studied for 4 months in Japan, now she works as an accountant. Recently she moved to a small village on the outskirts of Łomża.
- Sebastian – 36 years old, was born in Poland, always lived in Łomża, he works as a welder. He has a wife and a daughter.
- Damir – 40 years old, was born in Chechenya, Russian Fed., he lived in Grozny, then he came to Poland in 2008 as a refugee.
- Zurab – 18 years old, was born in Chechenya Russian Fed., came to Poland as a refugee with his parents. He lived in Łomża for 12 years, previously he lived also in Germany. Currently, he is a student in technical high school
- Kateryna – 30 years old, was born in Ukraine and lived in Novohrad-Volynskiy, in May 2022 she came to Poland with her son because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Liudmyla – 29 years old, she was born in Ukraine, she lived in Nikalayev, in May 2022 she came to Poland with her husband and 4 years old daughter because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

There was also a photographer Joel Hauck with 4 accompanying students from the Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology, who was a partner of SGH in the photovoice project. Students were providing technical support for participants when taking photos and also provided translation in case if language barrier occur (only one participant didn't speak polish).

Methodological note

The aim of the workshop was to examine how the space of Łomża is perceived by its inhabitants – both native and migrants. We strived to define the welcoming and unwelcoming space. For this purpose, two research methods were used: mental mapping and photovoice.

The aim of the mapping method is to create mental maps (Lynch 1960). According to this method, introduced for the first time by geographer Kevin Lynch, the participants of the research are asked to draw a map of a space surrounding them. In research done by Lynch participants were paying special attention to objects of infrastructure such as streets, bus stations, and elements that were important for them when orienting in space. When interpreting the results of the research, such elements as the size of objects

and the distance between them was analyzed.

Our research was inspired by Kevin Lynch mental mapping, but we modified this method significantly. We asked participants of the workshop to draw their city, dividing the space into five types according to the way they spend time there and the emotions they feel toward the space. Those were spaces and places: they live in (drawn in yellow color); they usually go (blue color); they like most (red color); they feel good (green color); they do not like (brown color). Participants received simple instructions not to influence the process of map drawing. Later, when participants were presenting the maps, we asked additional questions due to understanding better mental maps that were created.

The second method adopted was photovoice which was described for the first time by Wang and Burris (1997). The method refers to photos made by participants of the research. Therefore, the knowledge is created by the researcher and participants.

We adopted this method in Łomża. We ask participants of the workshops to make photos of either welcoming or unwelcoming spaces in their city. We gave them three instructions: 1. To remember that finally, they will have to choose two photos that will be presented at the international exhibition. Despite that fact, we ask them not to feel obliged to make only “nice” photos, as if for the postcard 2. When taking photos try to somehow link them with maps they prepared in the morning 3. Make photos according to their feelings toward the city, we ensured them that nobody will assess their choices and we will respect any choice they make

A characteristic feature of both methods is that knowledge is co-created by workshop participants, while the role of researchers is only to moderate the process, make notes and influence the results of the study as little as possible. To sum up, the data collected consisted of the maps and the photos created by the participants, the photos taken by the photographer and the researchers, the notes written down by the researchers, and the sound records of the workshop. When analyzing that data, we focused on three dimensions: the interpretation of the photos, the maps, and the related narratives, the relations between participants, researchers, and a photographer during the workshop, and the overall impression participants had after the workshop.

As for the ethics of the research, we explained the aim of the workshop in a detailed way and asked participants if their agreement to take part in the workshop, and to use their images and photos in digital book and exhibition. The participants were asked to sign four documents (participation in the research, privacy, use of portraits, and copyright), and each of the documents was sent to them in advance. During the workshop a continuous interaction between the researcher and the participants took place.

Brief description of the maps and the photos by the participants

Joanna Chojnowska



"I like my town very much. You need 5-10 minutes by car or 20 minutes on your feet to reach the beautiful, wonderful places, unpolluted. [...] I'm mentally from the forest, I love the forest, I relax there, and recharge my energy. I've coloured red, d, blue and green the forest and the river because I like these places the most and I go there very often.

I feel worst, I don't like to do shopping in the shopping malls, I don't like places with buildings, cars, without green places. I also colored blue my working place because I go there every day."



No entry

This is a famous building, a water tower. The tower is from 1952 and was in use until 1992. I chose this photo because the area where the tower is located is fenced and there is a no-entry sign. To take this photo, I had to lie down. I have an emotional attitude to this place because when it was impossible to get there legally, I used to go there with my boyfriend, we went inside, and there is a beautiful view of Łomża. I really regret that this is a closed, unused area. I once had a dream that I would buy this tower and make a nice cafe there. I also hope that someone will make my dream come true. But so far - no entry.



Sąsiedzi (Neighbors)

This is a photo from the so-called new Jewish cemetery. Perhaps even people living in Łomża do not know that there is such a cemetery. It was established in 1882 and until World War II it was the burial place for Jews who lived in Łomża, who made up a very large group of residents. You may not see it at a first glance, but on the left side, you can see two towers of the Catholic Church. The city was largely inhabited by the Jewish community, Łomża is close to the town of Jedwabne, these relations have deteriorated, which is actually a dark spot in our history...quite controversial emotions may be associated with it. Here it is shown that our worlds were connected, we used to live close to each other, and here this closeness is visible physically, as a symbol.



I draw a map of Łomża, like a normal map with districts etc. I marked a hospital here, the place which I really do not like and everything connected to it. I also marked my home and workplace, and the areas where I usually ride a bike, mostly the eastern part of the town. I relax outside the town, where I can go with my bike and spend time in the forest, next to the river. I like places which are not so urbanized, you can rest there, forget about people, about Łomża [laught]. I don't like the hospital, because I often go there with people, assist them, and I see how they are sometimes treated badly [Damir works with other foreigners] but also I don't like everything related to the hospitals, the smell... I have bad memories related to hospitals.



Zasmuta (Sadness)

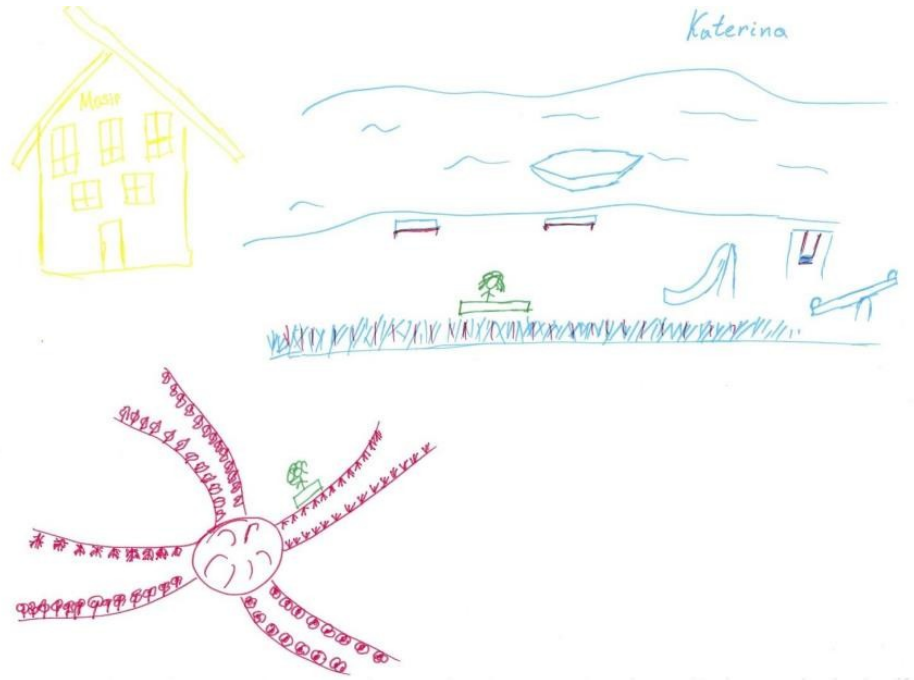
I just do not like to see this hospital. It is the architecture of the USSR, this building, these conifer trees. Everyone has some problems, diseases, it is very sad for me. I do not like this place. This architecture of the USSR is simply everywhere, if I did not know it was Łomża, I could say it was Moscow.



Świeżość (Freshness)

Smiling people, very, very pleasant place, these new buildings as if life goes on, no matter what.

Kateryna Liber



I really like the district where I live in the town. I like the boulevard and the river nearby because I have a son and there is a playground. I also enjoy sitting

and looking at the river. I also enjoy going to the park, because there is a lot of flowers. I didn't find places in Łomża which I don't like, because it is very similar to my hometown, so I feel comfortable here.



Nadzieja (Hope)

Every day I go there, I look at this monument, and I have two different feelings. One is that everyone has a life and must bear this cross. And this is not a pleasant feeling. But when I see the sun, I hope everything will be fine.



Spokój (Calmness)

This is this park, I like it very much, it is such a peace when you look at these people and such a peaceful life, very positive emotions, very pleasant, I like this place a lot.

Klaudia Grabowska



I live in the apartment building in the residential area, and I like this place because there is a lot of green areas like meadows, and fields and in Łomża there are fewer places like this nowadays. I also drew a hill which is not far away from my home and you can observe boulevards and a river from it. I enjoy walking in that green areas – meadows, fields. I couldn't find a place in the town which I really don't like, but I definitely do not like new places where there are a lot of buildings without green areas, no matter if it is a town center

or suburbs. There is one new place, renewed, where there are plants, nice alleys and a fountain, you can sit there, roller skate.



Future

The picture shows the fields, the fields behind the church. There were a lot of meadows here, now basically all of them have been bought. And more and more houses are being built, most of them look alike. And it is green on the one hand and conflagration on the other.



Most, miejsce spotkań
(Bridge, the meeting
place)

This is a bridge, a meeting place. I used to go here with my parents when I was little, there is also a beach here. Now I come here with my friends, it is a place frequented by people of all ages. People come here for walks, sit and swim. Others fish here. There is nature, but there are also graffiti which add charm, but also destroy this place a bit.



“Recently, I moved out from Łomża, not far away, just 5-7 km from the town. I see the windmill from my window, which is nearby my home. I see it from my window and it is a nice point which I can observe. I live in a very green area, next to the small village, and it was a reason why I moved out because I have to live as far as it is possible from the town. I also lived nearly 7 years in Warsaw, and I don’t want to go back there, ever. I work in Łomża, but I usually spend my time in the forest or next to the river. I drew the main road as a reference to my home which is the place where I like to spend my time most. There is no place where I don’t like to go, but I don’t like shops and the shopping.”



Chinese market

Here I wanted to show these two worlds. This global world that began to flood us completely, and reached every place, even such a small town like Łomża. This photo is twofold for me. On the one hand, this is a plus that we all already have access to certain things, that we can have everything. On the other hand, these nice red booths do not fit this place. I do not like it... consumerism. We focus on having as much as possible and this causes us

to make unconsidered purchases, buy a lot, and then everything lands in the garbage, and this is bad for our nature.



Be safe and be happy

I really like water, a lake or every kind of water where it is nice to spend time. There is a color combination: red with orange. I just liked it. We sat on a bench in front of this and this place attracted my attention.

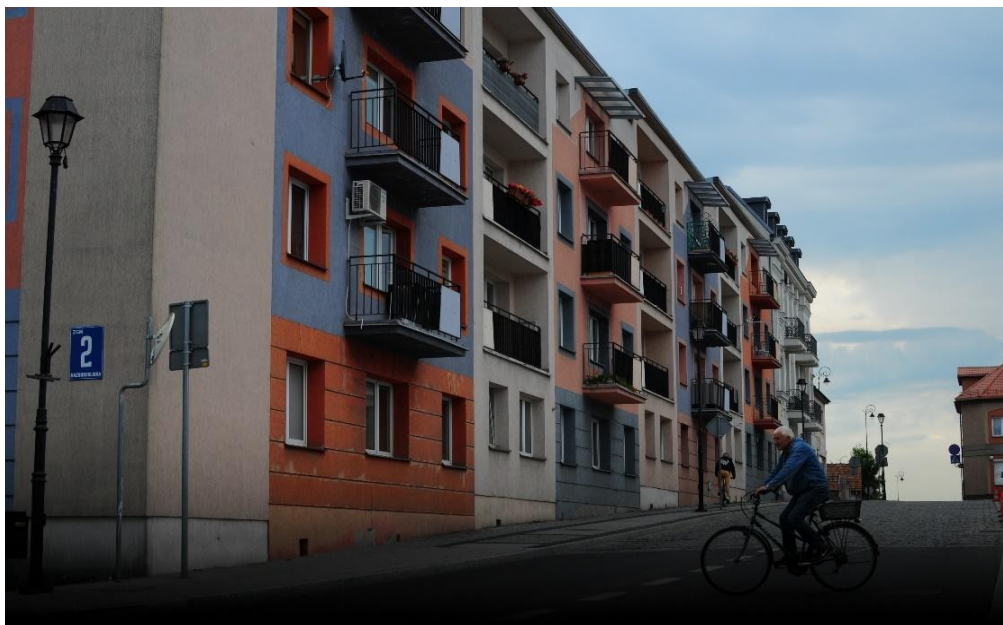


"I drew the Old Market Square, the church, my home. I used blue color to mark the places where I like to walk, and I like to walk all around Łomża, sometimes even 10 km a day. I like to walk on the main avenue which leads to Old Market Square, where I can drink a coffee when my husband goes to the gym. I don't have places that I do not like in Łomża, but maybe I just didn't find them yet.



Lantern

This lantern is for me a symbol of the helping hands that Łomża and Poland showed to me. In this foreign country, I saw a light and peace. Looking at this picture, I know that when the night begins, there will be someone who will turn on the light. Łomża is this light for me. Maybe someone only sees the lantern, but I see the whole story.



Morning in Łomża

Morning. A favorite time for every mom, when you have the opportunity to be away from home worries. When you can spend time in the cold streets, you look around, and everyone takes care of their own things, just like this old man does. Today I saw Łomża with new eyes. Loving eyes. I fall in love with every house and every café, avenue and park. Everything is filled with peace and that is what inspires me.

Sebastian Zoń



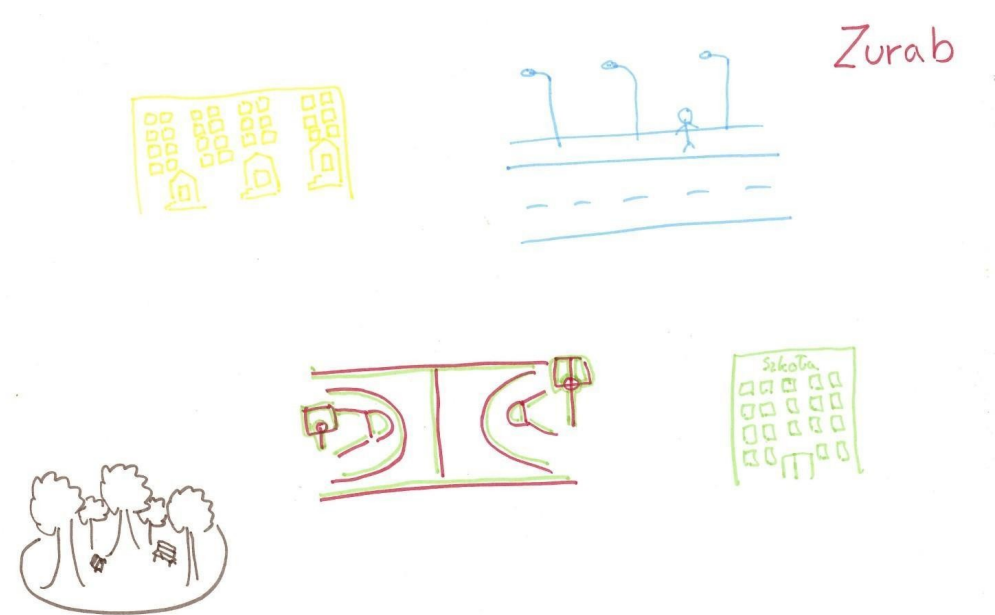
Places I don't like, I'm not sure if it is visible on my map, but it is a shop with an insect [DW: ladybug, one of the chains popular in Poland] and there is too many of them in the town, but well, if it is needed, here they are. Nonetheless, I'm happy there is more and more roads for bikes, because my daughter and I can ride a bike together next to the river. I also drew a Queen Bona Hill,

which is a little bit bigger on my map than in reality, but I remember it from my childhood and it was so big for me at that time. I drew my home and my small garden where I can spend time, so in general, I like green areas in Łomża, like river banks and the beach, which can be appealing.



Long history

The photo shows an advertisement of a festival that has been going on in our city for 35th years. It is an international festival that gives us the opportunity to see art and culture from other countries. In such a small city, if this festival did not exist, we would not have such an opportunity. When I was little, I went to these performances, now I can go there with my daughter.



I live in an apartment building, like most people. I like to walk around, but my favorite places are sports grounds – basketball courts, and football grounds. I also like my school, where I can meet my friends and talk to them. Places which I do not like are parks because they are nice places but the benches are always dirty and you cannot sit down there. In general I like parks but the benches makes this places unwelcome to me.



Stairs

Here it is a nice place and a nice view. That is why I took this picture. I like to walk, I am not here often but sometimes I come. I think it is nice. Those are the stairs to the river.



Dirt

With this photo I wanted to show that the benches in the parks are so dirty that it is impossible to sit on them.

Analysis of the data

Typology and narratives

Welcoming vs unwelcoming

During the presentation of the maps, all participants pointed out that the most welcoming and nice parts of Łomża are green areas like the river and its surroundings, forests, and parks – all inside or in the suburbs of the town. Many mentioned new areas with a lot of new buildings, and shops but with a lack of nature as an unwelcoming, unpleasant part of the town.

Private vs public spaces

Participants choose to put in their photos only public spaces such as housing areas, parks, streets, and river banks, no private spaces or even semi-private such as bars or cafes appeared.

The quiet, idyllic life of a small city vs the hustle and bustle of metropolises

Cultural heritage vs. Modernity and globalization

Joanna chose photos showing the history of the city and its ethnoreligious diversity in the past, this diversity was assessed by her very positively. With regret, she emphasized that places important for the identity of the city and its inhabitants are abandoned, forgotten by the Łomżas community, and access to them is prohibited. On the other hand, Magda chose photos showing the influx of globalization to Łomża – this was illustrated by a photo with the Ali Express parcel locker in front of the historic house. Reflection on globalization was accompanied by reflection on the contemporary consumerist lifestyle, on the thoughtless purchase of unnecessary goods, which is damaging the environment.

Nature vs human interference in nature

Klaudia in her photographs showed the beauty of the landscape of Łomża and contrasted this nature with the effects of human activity. In the first photo, she showed meadows, which are increasingly built up with single-family houses. On the one hand, this shows the socio-economic development of the city, but on the other hand, wild nature is increasingly modified by man, which can cause some regret. In the second photo, Klaudia showed a bridge over the river. A beautiful riverside landscape cut by a concrete bridge on which illegal graffiti was placed arouses conflict emotions in the inhabitants of Łomża. Graffiti can be perceived as an act of vandalism, but by some people is perceived as an art in the public space. In the pictures, a certain nostalgia for the lost virgin landscapes can be noticed. Those changes in the environment can be seen as a result of urban development – sometimes chaotic and unplanned.

Negligence of municipal authorities vs. successful projects

Zurab and Sebastian's photos showed the negligence of the municipal authorities (dirty benches in the park, public toilets which are always closed), which was contrasted with the pride of the city, i.e. the Suitcase Street Theater

organized for 30 years (Long history by Sebastian). These photos show that the development of the city can be full of contradictions and contrasts.

Further reflections

The photovoice method seems to be a perspective diagnostic tool for city authorities. Making photos make it possible to see the city in a new way. This method seems to be especially useful when making research among migrants, who are not so fluent in the language of the hosting society, and therefore it is hard for them to say about their needs and problems. The photovoice method has the potential to activate them, to make them eager to participate in research that is conducted due to define the problems of a city.

Final discussion and co-evaluation

The final reflection of participants of the workshop concerned three topics:

1. Thanks to the workshops, the participants saw how their city is seen by other residents. The gaze of the migrants allowed the native inhabitants of Łomża to look at their own city once again, they saw a completely new perspective, and they rethought the city. The participants of the workshop emphasized that the gaze of migrants, especially those newly arrived, was like a breath of fresh air for them, making them realize that they often do not notice how much Łomża has to offer. Participants also emphasized that the diverse age of the participants was an additional advantage of the workshops because it allowed capturing a diverse point of view, which depends on life experiences.
2. The participants of the workshop emphasized that the world seen through the lens of the camera is seen differently, you can notice places previously unnoticed and some details of the landscape. Some new observations can be done when looking at the pictures after they were made.
3. Participants emphasized that the advantage of the workshop was the people they could meet. During the event there was a relaxed atmosphere, the participants willingly shared their reflections about their city and some personal observations. Some emphasized that the experience of getting to know other participants was more valuable for them than the photos they learned to take.

In conclusion, everyone assessed the participation in the workshop as a positive, valuable experience and that they would be happy to take part in such an event again. This assessment is even more important after taking into account the fact that the participants came to the workshop mainly expecting to learn how to make professional photos, they did not expect an in-depth discussion and reflections on the inhabited city.



Description of the participants and the workshop

The visual research in Germany took place in Altenburg, a mid-sized city in Thuringia, in the eastern part of Germany. The research was conducted by the Faculty II Architecture, Education and Arts of the University of Siegen under the direction of Prof. Dr. Sabine Meier (RheinMain University of Applied Sciences) and Dominic Danz (University of Siegen). Various partners helped to implement the project on site. Among others, the Farbküche in Altenburg in the person of Susann Seifert, the co-working space SkatHub in the person of Hendrik Sadowski (who was also the commissioned photographer) and Ulrike Wolf, and the local Catholic welfare organisation Caritas in the person of Ajtac Ismaylova.

The Farbküche is a social enterprise that offers visitors and Altenburg residents of all ages a fully equipped art space, where workshops take place or social space-oriented actions such as participatory graffiti or the Stadtmensch project are initiated. The latter enables people from (big) cities to temporarily settle in (mostly) shrinking regions through federal funding and to build something locally / to participate in the place.

SkatHub is a co-working space. The founders are young people from the city Altenburg. Two of them participated in the workshop. At the same time, the office of photographer Hendrik Sadowski with his film and photo company

Alumatel is situated within the SkatHub.

Caritas is a Catholic, Germany-wide welfare organisation that takes on various tasks of the German welfare state. Among other things, it organizes the management of refugees with other welfare organisations, offers counselling services for refugees, integration courses, etc.

The workshop lasted two days (30/31-05-2022). In the morning of the first day, the project was presented. Afterwards, all participants, including the photographer and the researcher, introduced themselves. They were also asked about their favourite animal in order to create a familiar atmosphere.

The participants were:

Marcel Brock, 31 years old, from Germany. Moved to Altenburg in 2017.

Sema Gajjeva, 19, moved to Germany from Azerbaijan two years ago.

Susann Seifert, 41, was born in Altenburg and lives since in the area around the city.

Ulrike Wolf, 27, was born in Altenburg and lives there.

Valentin Rühlmann, 22, Also born in Altenburg and lives there.

Wajd Alkhateb, 19, from Syria and lives for three years in Altenburg.

The photographer, Hendrik Sadowski, 27, also took part in the mapping. He is a native of Altenburg and lives there. Two of the participants, Wajd Alkhateb and Sema Gajjeva, came across us on the second day and then presented their photos. They did not participate in the mapping.

The mapping started on the first morning. At this point, two of the 6 participants were at SkatHub, the location of the workshop on the first day. Marcel Brock and Susann Seifert. After the welcome, the introduction of the project / the further course of the project and the introduction of all participating people on site, we started with the mapping. After creating the maps, everyone presented their maps and explained the meanings of the maps.

Susann Seifert left the group after the mapping because of other appointments. Valentin Rühlmann, after an introduction to the topic, went to get materials in the course of the morning so that he could paint his map at home, as he was also prevented from doing so.

At noon, after a short lunch break, Hendrik Sadowski introduced the use of cameras. To put what they had learned into practice, pictures were taken in the backyard of the SkatHub, while Hendrik Sadowski was on hand to answer questions. The cameras were provided by the University of Siegen, although some of the participants brought their own cameras.

Later in the afternoon, Ajtac Ismaylova joined the workshop and was introduced to the topic of the project, as was Ulrike Wolf. Ajtac took two cameras for her niece and a friend of the niece and informed the research team that they were both attending school and could not come by until the next afternoon. All participants were asked to take pictures of Altenburg that they thought best represented Altenburg / or in terms of the digital book, how they would like Altenburg to be represented.

The second day of the workshop took place in the Farbküche, run by Susann Seifert. Since two of the six participants only had time in the afternoon, Ulrike Wolf, Hendrik Sadowski and Valentin Rühlmann began to present their maps. Currently, Marcel Brock and Susann Seifert were also present. After a break, the participants began to narrow down the number of the photos taken and

were again made aware that only two of the photos taken could be selected. As an aid, it was offered to first select five photos, if the selection was too difficult, and then to select more. After selecting the photos, the participants were also asked to think of titles for them. To have a good look at the photos during the selection process, the participants were provided with laptops with the appropriate equipment to connect to the camera / read out the SD card. After the selection, four of the six participants presented their photos and gave reasons for their selection. After an afternoon break with food, Wajd Alkhateb and Sema Gaijeva joined the workshop with Ajtac. They were guided again and selected their pictures, gave them titles and presented them. Ajtac translated into German when there were difficulties with the language. Afterwards, two group photos were taken in the garden of the Farbküche. At the end of the workshop, all participants, the researchers and the photographer took part in a feedback round to discuss and share the experiences of the workshop and then to linger and talk to each other in a farewell round outside the workshop.

Methodological note

This part of the visual research aimed to provide new perspectives for understanding the photos taken and their rationale/intention by migrated and long-term Altenburg residents. The pivotal point of the research was the town of Altenburg. The focus was on the dynamics between the long-term residents and migrants to strengthen their voice in non-urban, socially innovative initiatives through the co-creation of knowledge about the ideas and sense of belonging of these new communities. Thus, the research became a process of 'collective learning' based on collaboration between the researchers, the photographer, the social actors, and the residents.

To achieve these results, two creative/visual methods were used during the workshop: Mapping and photovoice. The photovoice method was first described by Wang and Burris (1997) and refers to research where the images are created by the participants. For the workshop, this meant taking a research approach with rather than about the participants. Rather than simply depicting human experiences, the creative process of photography has become a method to understand participants' perceptions of their daily experiences in Altenburg, their sense of belonging (or not belonging) to the city, their projects for the future and their individual and collective aspirations (Pink 2006). Thus, thanks to the photovoice method, a focus was placed on the collaborative process of co-constructing visual knowledge (Green, Kloos, 2009) about the new communities located in the shrinking region.

The same approach was used for the cognitive mapping method.

The guidelines given to the participants were very simple, because we do not want to influence their representation of Altenburg. The guidelines comprises the following questions: 1) Where you live (yellow); 2) Places where you usually stay (blue); 3) Places you particularly like (red); 4) Places where you feel comfortable (green); 5) Places you dislike (brown).

The data collection deals with different types of data as suggested by Giorgi,

Pizzolati, Vacchelli (2021). In particular, the data collected consisted of the researchers' notes taken throughout the workshop, the maps and photographs developed by the participants, the photographs taken by the researchers and the photographer, the notes related to the final collective reflections with the participants and the transcription of the workshop recordings. This data had three main foci: 1) the relationships during the workshops (including the researchers, the social partners and the photographer), 2) the impact of the process on the participants and the photographs, maps and finally, the related narratives of the participants.

An important moment was the collective reflection during the workshop, which gave the participants the opportunity to explain the meanings of the maps they drew and the photos they took. As for the photos, participants were asked to present two images that they considered most meaningful in terms of their own representations of their life in the village and the emotions associated with these places.

In terms of research ethics, we adopted the following principles proposed by Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001): Respect for autonomy, Promotion of Social Justice, Active Promotion of Good, and Avoidance of harm. These principles were adhered to not only in the collection of four different documents signed by participants (participation in research, privacy, use of portraits and copyright), but also, and more importantly, through the continuous interactions between researchers and participants, following the approach of research as mutual care (Douglas, 1985).

Brief description of the maps and the photos by the participants

Marcel Brock



“Yes, so as I said, I’m not a native of Altenburg. For me, it’s like this: I’m actually quite active as a volunteer. That’s the way it is with me. I can’t stand it at all if I just sit at home and nothing happens. Even before I became active, I know a lot of people who say, “Ne Altenburg, I wouldn’t like to stay there.” But since I’ve been doing voluntary work, I’m sometimes out and about with people, and I prefer that to sitting at home with the ceiling falling on my head. It’s also sometimes the case that I’m often at the Church of the Brethren, because I do a lot for them. I’m not really devout or baptised, but the environment is calming and relaxing. You can help and make yourself useful. Most of the time, people don’t have a problem if you come there as an unbaptised person. I am a little bit religious and I can identify with the values, but I would not be baptised. The church here is symbolic. I go more to places where you have the feeling of being part of a community. Places where you have the feeling that you are there, but everything comes from above, you are treated down, you are not treated once and never again. If you’re going to do something, you want to feel like you’re part of the group. That is especially important to me personally. You don’t want to be just a free labour and be seen as a tool.”

“I am active in many places where I feel comfortable. If I go by current, I am less on the road at the moment than I would be. That’s why I can’t directly name any places that I particularly like at the moment. I live in South-East, which is a prefabricated building. (Many migrants live there, don’t they?) I would say yes, I don’t always see many people, but I would say yes. You definitely see different people, especially when you’re out and about a lot. “ (“You didn’t draw green, did you?”)

“Yes, as I said before I don’t like to be at home. I was a bit careful with green now. I would just like to be on the road more than I am at the moment.”



Church of the Brethren, a meeting place

“This is the Church of the Brethren, which can be seen as a meeting place. It offers something for different groups of people, whether big or small. The family centre is located there, as well as a small world shop and the Hofsalon, with many social events. This is a place where you can go if you want to relax, and switch off, because there are also events such as the Feierabend, organised once a month on Thursdays. There is a barbecue, you can meet other people, talk, and chat. “



Shipyards in Altenburg

“I chose this picture because it is also a positive image for Altenburg. It is the Mary Jane of the Ruhr. It is part of an international socio-cultural project and was restored and designed in Altenburg over 6 weeks by international craftsmen and artists. The ship is now also on the way, I do not know if it is

on the sea yet, but it is definitely on the way. A puppet play was also written during the project, and it will be performed where the ship is anchored. The project aimed to make the ship seaworthy again. In the picture, you can see the temporary shipyard on the red Zora where the ship was restored.”

Sema Gajieva



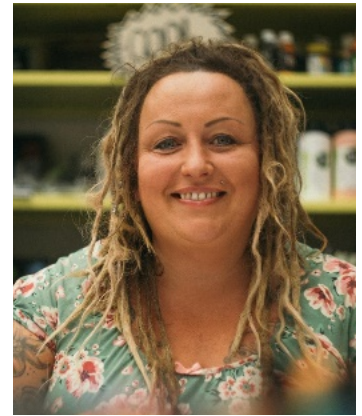
Feeling

“This shows the castle. It is a very quiet place; we often go there together and take a walk. It is an old building, and it is like a museum. This looks like the old buildings from my home country, it always feeds me. I took the picture late, in the evening. There are not many people around at that time, there is hardly anything going on. The city is empty but still very lively.”



Stadt in der Stadt
(City in the city)

“We took this photo because Altenburg is not just an old town. There are so many cool parks or squares here. Because there are a lot of old people living in Altenburg it is quiet, there are a lot of green areas and that is very good for me. After 6 pm when I’m in Altenburg and I look at it I find an inner peace. I feel rested and at ease. The place is calming for me.”



“So, I first made everything yellow because I feel alive everywhere. But I live in Rosels, which is seven kilometres from Altenburg. With my family, I have three children and a cat. But I’m very often in Altenburg, that’s where my heart beats. My centre of attention is of course the OpenLab and the Farbküche. I also enjoy being in the Casino, which you’ve already met. I think it’s nice here, the symbol of vacancy, that people come here and appropriate this space, conquer it and make it accessible to others. Many people from Altenburg also have a history with it. There is a dance hall in here. Many people fell in love there and danced and ate there. There used to be a lot of community there. In addition, there is the Kulturspäti, which is a centre of attraction, also for young people who have not yet been reached by the existing offers. I also like Rote Zora very much, it’s a place where mostly young people hang out. There’s a graffiti wall, a skateboarding area, rehearsal rooms, again some youth culture. What I find unfortunate is that this place is to be developed as a tourist centre. But I think we need the place as it is.”

“Altenburg has many gardens, I think over 60 gardens, and that’s my friend’s burr that I’ve been on. This is my island, my peace. It simply creates a lot in my head. Another thing I painted is Poschitzer Castle, at that time I always wanted to become a princess. It’s a castle, it’s a monument and it’s empty. Totally enchanted in a small park, forest, with a very old stock of trees, they have a soul, a history. There’s a little pond, a bench, I like to drink a beer there. It’s just very beautiful and quiet. I’d like to live there one day, in the castle.”

“We take a look to the south-east. I have no connection to it at all. I think the place lacks a bit of soul. The place is a neglected urban area. And I made the cross especially at the hexagon, there’s a place that’s sprayed full of offensive graffiti and our homeless alcoholics often sit in front of it. It’s a backdrop, there’s this wall and then there are people sitting in the middle of

it. That's the kind of thing where I'd rather have a unicorn or whatever (on the wall) (Marcel: "there are also children at the playgrounds, but next to them there are also people who drink alcohol and... I don't know, it's just not well organised"). When I did projects with young people there, I was sometimes quite scared. It's really crowded, super loud and also a lot of children who weren't wanted at all, and some of them had parents sitting there, some of them parents I ran away from at the time, classic right-wingers, and they sat there with their beer bottles. That's why I have such a disturbed relationship with South-East, but at the same time I say that we must go there sometimes, with projects."

"One place I like is [not understandable / Place where people get help], where Yvonne is. She did her voluntary service with us, used to be a hairdresser, and changed her life again at the age of 50 and is a contact point for people who are not doing well. There they have a protected space and someone who listens to them. I also like the PGH very much. It's an association dedicated to saving and preserving monuments. Is there still a bit of room for improvement, what does a place like this radiate, does everyone really feel welcome? There is definitely room for improvement. I also like to go to the Hofsalon at the Gebrüderkirche. Churches have a lot of space here and their membership is shrinking, and I think that when churches take responsibility for opening their rooms, especially in the Corona period, contact restrictions can be better observed because it is simply large, and we have a pastor here who has an open heart for people outside the church community. It's a place for everyone, where you can spend time without being forced to consume. Then over to Altenburg North. They say that Altenburg North used to be Altenburg South. I grew up there, had a nice childhood, lots of classmates, but it still has the stigma of "what you live in the block", yet it has become really nice, lots of deconstruction, lots of green spaces, so actually everything you need."



(Stop) Waiting for the world to change

“This project started with the question: Who owns the city and who decides what it looks like? And so, we painted this with 170 children and I simply put this stop sign on it, because I was immediately ordered to remove the graffiti, which I couldn’t understand. Because, as you can see here, the building had not been renovated at all, the windows had been smashed, there was illegal graffiti on it, and we simply made it a bit fancier. Many kids took part and left traces and that created identification – and the graffiti is still there.”



Home is a feeling, not a place

“I worked in the public order office for many years, and I was increasingly confronted with people who had converted public spaces into living rooms or skate parks, or who had simply put up a couch. So, I dealt with the question, who owns the city now? Who decides what it looks like? Why cannot you just put a couch where you like it? Just the way they did it! This is in Poschitz Park. That is the most beautiful place!”



“So, I started with where I live, which wasn’t so easy because I grew up in Altenburg and have moved around a bit in the meantime. At the moment, I live in Waldstraße, which is why I painted a big wall and directly behind it the Roten Spitzen (red peaks) of Altenburg, because no matter where I am I always see the Roten Spitzen. Besides, my mum lives near the Roten Spitzen, so as a point of orientation, I’m there quite often. Afterwards I painted the winding paths in Altenburg, I like to walk there with my dog. These are often paths that not everyone knows, and from there I also like to go to the Great Pond, where I often meet up with friends. You just go for a walk around the big pond and in the meantime, people do a lot there, when the weather is nice, somehow all the people from Altenburg come out and go for a walk. Besides, my brother lives there. It’s nice when the family is spread all over the city, then you always have an anchor point where you know you can go.”

“Next, I painted the marketplace, as a place where I go very often, because it is simply the central place, I always pass by there, be it for work or for shopping or for friends, I always pass by the marketplace. On the one hand, it’s just part of it and on the other hand, it’s a place where you’re very visible, you somehow always meet people you know, because it’s also such a big square that’s always full. And that’s why marketplace is a place where I often go but also don’t feel so comfortable because it’s like being on a platter.”

“Of course, I also painted our co-working space, because that’s the place where I’ve been almost every day for the last 2-3 years, because I work there, because I built it up together with Hendrik and Lars and we’ve put a lot of time and love into it, and that’s our place in Altenburg, which we can design and enliven ourselves. “

“Then I noticed that there’s a colour I haven’t used at all, namely places I don’t like. And I thought about it for a long time, you could say that there are a lot of ruined buildings in Altenburg or some ugly places with rubbish. But I

really couldn't say that there is a place that I don't like. And because I haven't found a place, I'm a person with an open mind, so it's not a physical place, but rather in people's heads. That's something I don't like about Altenburg, people from Altenburg who don't really like their town and criticise everything, the typical people from Altenburg. That's why there is this character "Günther" who is supposed to reflect that."



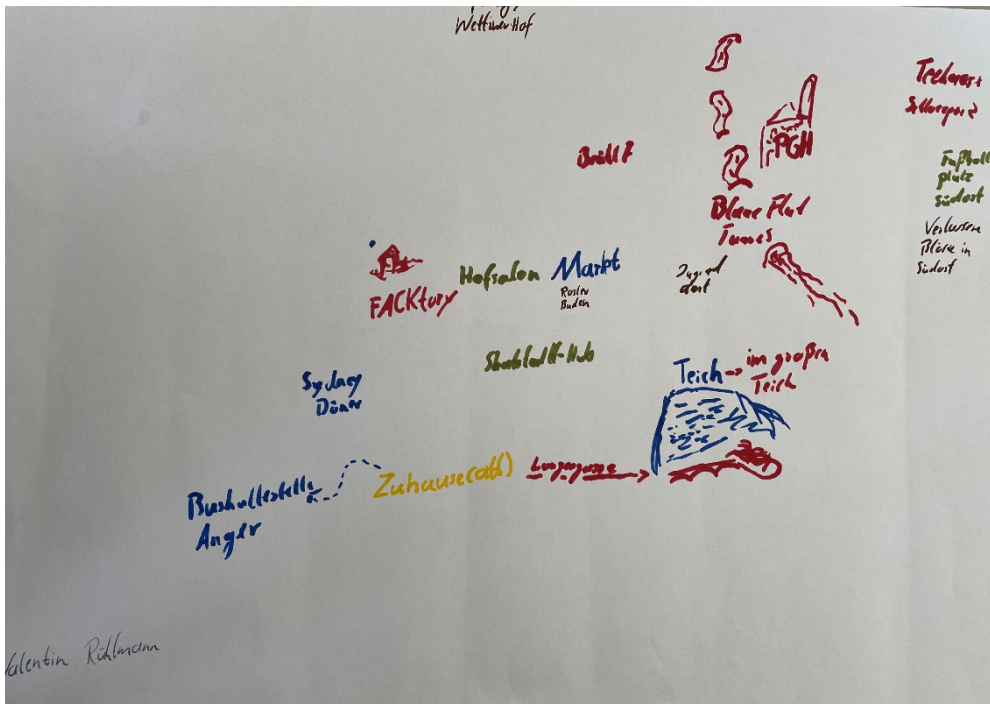
Backyard view

"This is the picture I see from my flat. I live in the city centre in a very old, but beautifully renovated house, right under the roof. You have to imagine, my building is really beautiful, old and colourful and next to it you have this ruined landscape. Almost all the buildings you see in the picture are empty and partly crumbling into each other. When I moved into the flat, in winter, there were no green trees, so I only saw the ruins. But then I thought the view was somehow so beautiful. But even back then I heard people who had seen it say, "You've got the best view, it's really bad!", and I could never understand that. I would rather look at something like that than at a white house facade. It is a beauty that is depicted, even if at first glance they are only ruins."



Leaving traces

“It is an old empty building but, in every window, there are painted things. We once had a project with my school class where we went into the building and all the children from my class painted these windows from the inside with motifs from the Altenburg Skat game or other card games like Black Peter. And every time I see this building I think that I painted this king and my best friend painted the frog back then. It was been ten or fifteen years ago, and yet it is still there even if it is a bit faded. It is nice to know that some people know this story and other people wonder why there are these pictures in this abandoned house.”



“So, it’s been hard for me to define places as just good or bad. I think it’s more about the people I interact with and less about the places themselves, first I painted a house where my grandma lives upstairs and the 5 of us downstairs with 90 square metres which meant I always slept on the couch in the living room, but the beauty of the house was just the huge garden. Then the next place I painted is the bus stop at the market, which is where I am often, because I am often on the road between Altenburg, Jena and Erfurt where I study. I try to take public transport, so I spend a lot of time there. Between the two places is the Sidney Döner, and that’s just a place where you’re often. If you come home late, you get your dinner there. That has become established, even in the neighbourhood. Back then, when I was at grammar school, I would go with friends to get a kebab, which has now gone so far that they already know what I’ve ordered when I come in.”

“As a place where I often go, Langgsasse is a place where I like to go, simply because I find this long pond beautiful. Beautiful trees and beautiful houses, I like to be there. It also has something to do with my childhood, my best childhood friend Lennart lived in South-East and when you went up there, you went that way. Next, a place where I often go: the big pond, where you pass by, meet up with friends, we had a nice neighbourhood barbecue there last week. And near this pond there is a place where I particularly like to be. There’s this bridge, and when I need time to think in the evening, there’s this bridge. For me, it’s always been an opportunity to put the world in order in the evening, when there’s no one around. From the pond we go to the market, the market is a place where you often pass by, that you can’t avoid. It’s also the first place where I don’t feel so at home, that’s the Rostock embankment. Not because I don’t like the place, but more because of conversations you can overhear, they are on a wavelength where I say I don’t want to have to deal with that, even against whole groups of people. Then two places near

the market where I not only like to be but also feel comfortable is the Skatstadt Hub (Co Working Space) because I always like to go there to work and when I have a meeting I like to go there and always say, guys let's go there. And the Hofsalon, it doesn't exist yet, but I think it's nice with the green around it. Also, our FACTory here, so where I feel comfortable, that doesn't exist yet (still under construction). But to go there and stand on the balcony and look at the garden, I find very beautiful. The people also inspire me, we already have a group of 20 people who keep coming up with new ideas."



Echo

"This Altenburg Nord and, for me, this picture and the whole neighbourhood are symbolic of a life story or a life plan. When these neighbourhoods were built in the 60s, 70s and 80s, they were the places where people wanted to live. Everyone who got one bragged about it. They were new buildings, right? So, it was a status symbol to live there. Now you see the grey and that only one flat is occupied at each entrance and on each floor and the rest is dilapidated and collapsed. And that is for me a bit of the symbolic power of a way of life that was from another time or another world, but which no longer works. You can see that this building complex, way of life, and area have no future. It is in the process of dying out until at some point it will be completely empty and demolished like other buildings."



Zukunftsmusik (music of the future)

“As a parallel image, I decided on this one. The composition of the picture also frames something, the semi-circular, the picture saloon that will be created there in the future. It is less systemic, asynchronous, trees growing wild, this car standing in the middle, a completely different pictorial language. It is more natural, unsystematic, growing, and that in connection with this construction of a space for people who will come together from different directions and life plans and ideas in this place and meet and exchange ideas, meet at eye level, with very different stories, is perhaps a new beginning. Also, for the people who once left the old block or will leave it. For me, it is the response image to the other.”

Wajd Alkhateb



Key

“We took the photo because we saw a lot of people. The centre is always busy. We wanted to show that there are not only buildings but also people. When you come to Altenburg, you always visit the centre first. When I was in Schmölln, I only wanted to see the centre of Altenburg. There are many shops there...the most important places are in the centre.”



Art

“The theatre is very old and we did some research and found out that many famous actors and many artists have performed and danced there. It is a beloved place, not only in Altenburg or for people from Altenburg, but also for outsiders. It has made Altenburg known to people from outside.”

Analysis of the data

Welcoming Spaces: physical characteristics

For the participants, several dimensions determine whether they feel comfortable in a place. On the one hand, places were mentioned several times such as green spaces, a quiet environment or where the history of the city can be seen. For example, the ponds with their trees around them in Altenburg were mentioned by Valentin and Ulrike. Valentin told in particular detail about the bridge at the lake where it is very quiet in the evening: “There is this bridge, and when I need time to think in the evening, there is this bridge. For me, it has always been the opportunity in the evening, when there is no one around, to put the world in order”. Susann named several places, like the Altenburg castle park, the forest around it and especially emphasised the gardens in Altenburg and described Altenburg as a garden city with its more

than 60 gardens. She feels particularly at home in the garden that she helped to design with a friend. She describes this place as: “My island, my peace. It simply creates a lot in my head”. Her dream place is Poschwitz Castle. She refers to the green surroundings, which give the castle a special magic: “Totally enchanted in a small park, forest, with a very old stock of trees. They have a soul, a history. There’s another little pond, a bench, I like to drink a beer there sometimes.” She also tells us in the pictures that it is “the most beautiful place” in Altenburg. The presence of new green spaces and the tranquillity created by the deconstruction helped to destigmatise Altenburg Nord, which was called a “block” in the past.

Sema describes in her pictures that she often goes to Altenburg Castle in the centre: “It is a very quiet place; we often go there together and take a walk. It is an old building, and it is like a museum”. She appreciates the quietness and the character of the building and still finds: “The city is empty but still very lively”. At the same time, she has a special connection to the castle because its history reminds her of buildings from her home country, Azerbaijan: “This looks like the old buildings from my home country, it always feeds me”. When she visits the place, it gives her energy, similar to Susann’s energy when she visits her friend’s co-designed garden. Besides the historic buildings of the city, Sema also likes the green spaces of Altenburg or the other quiet places: “There are so many cool parks or squares here. Because there are a lot of old people living in Altenburg it is quiet, there are a lot of green areas and that is very good for me”. She likes the quietness of the city and finds “inner peace” and feels “rested and ease”. During the personal interview, she told us that moving to a big city would not be an option for her, even if she had to move away for an education she would like to do. Ulrike also appreciates the tranquillity and characteristics of Altenburg. She explains that she prefers to walk along small alleys and paths when she goes for a walk: “These are often paths that not everyone knows”.

Opportunities of appropriation

The second dimension of places that the participants appreciate is the opportunity to appropriate concrete places. Together with Ulrike, Valentin mentioned the SkatHub, the co-working space that Ulrike, Hendrik, and Lars have realised. It is freely designed and offers space for new ideas. Valentin likes to work there and invites people to meet there at meetings. Ulrike describes this place as a “place in Altenburg that we can design and revitalise ourselves”, in which she has put “a lot of time and love”. In addition to the SkatHub, Valentin also mentions the future FACKtory, a club that is currently being set up and which he is building up with other committed people. The description of the future FACKtory and the indulgence in the idea, even though he emphasises: “it doesn’t exist yet” shows the deep connection between the (future) Place and him. Susann sees the city (and

vacancy) as opportunities to appropriate space and thus as opportunities for political change. During the workshop, she repeatedly asks the question of her actions in the city: “Who actually owns the city? She also clearly marks places that she has appropriated, or places that have been made her own by friends and colleagues, as places she feels comfortable in and likes. In this way, all three (consciously or unconsciously) engage in Place-Making (Belina 2013) by advancing their narrative of how Altenburg is or should be and translating this into political or social and economic actions, such as the opening of the SkatHub as a workplace or Farbküche with projects for children and young people or the occupation of free spaces through graffiti. Susann’s photo shows graffiti, which she realised in a project with 170 children to make a dilapidated, graffitied building “a little bit more fancy”. In her other picture, “Home is a feeling, not a place”, she also shows how unknown people have set up a retreat in Poschwitz Park by placing a couch with cushions there. Marcel notes that he prefers to get involved in groups and has fun doing so when he is given the opportunity to contribute and participate rather than just being given strict orders in hierarchical structures: “If you are already doing something, you want to have the feeling of being part of the group. That is particularly important to me personally. You don’t want to be just a free labourer and be seen as a tool”.

Susann describes that she likes to be in the Casino: “Here, I find it nice, also the symbol of vacancy, also that people arrive here and appropriate this rum, conquer it and make it accessible to others”. The Casino stood empty for a long time and is now being refurbished by the StadtMensch initiative. The young townspeople have a free hand in the revival of the cult building in Altenburg. In addition to the Casino, the Rote Zora is also named: “I also like Rote Zora a lot, it’s more of a place where mostly young people hang out. There’s a graffiti wall, a skateboarding area, rehearsal rooms, again some youth culture. What I find unfortunate is that this place is to be developed as a tourist centre”. What makes this place special for Susann is the possibility for visiting young people to appropriate the place and spend their free time there, creating “youth culture” in the ageing city. She sees it threatened by commercial plans to change the area for tourism and make it inaccessible to young people.

In Ulrike’s photo “Leaving Traces”, childlike painting lines can be seen on windowpanes of an old building. She explains that she painted these panes together with her primary school class and her best friend and that it can still be seen today. Here (as with most places) several dimensions come together for Ulrike. One is that this is an appropriated space, made possible by Altenburg’s massive vacancy. Another factor is Ulrike’s Place-Attachment: “every time I see this building, I think that I painted this king and my best friend painted the frog back then. It was ten or fifteen years ago, and yet it is still there even if it is a bit faded”. She associates the place with childhood memories, the experience of painting the building with her class friend and is reminded of it. It also includes the dimension, that of the social relationships associated with the place.

The third dimension is intended or unintended social relations and interactions that take place at certain gathering places. Marcel finds that the voluntary groups and associations he is involved in, which have a low level of hierarchical structures, make places to places he likes to be in. He calls the Gebrüderkirche, which is the initiator of many activities and initiatives, a “meeting place”. He further contradicts the statement of friends or acquaintances “Altenburg, I wouldn’t like to stay there”, emphasises his voluntary group activities and says that this makes him prefer to be in Altenburg and that he likes it that way. He wants to have the feeling of being part of a group: “That is particularly important to me personally”. He prefers “being out and about” to sitting alone “at home where the ceiling falls on your head”. He describes his home rather as a negative place, because social relationships are not present there: “I don’t like it at all when I just sit at home and then nothing happens”. He would rather be out and about more than he is now.

Susann appreciates places of friends and acquaintances in Altenburg like her friend Yvonne’s help centre in the city centre, her friend’s garden, the Casino, which is being rebuilt by the young townspeople of the StadtMenschen initiative, the Kulturspät¹ run by them or her home, where she lives with her family. Valentin likes his regular snack bar because they know him locally and know directly what he will order. The pond also has a special quality, because: “you pass by there, meet friends, we had a nice neighbourhood barbecue there last week”. He is “thrilled” that he can build the FACtory together with a group of 20 people and that they can realise their ideas together. For Ulrike, friends, family, and social relationships are also a decisive factor in whether she feels comfortable in a place. She mentions Altenburg’s landmark, the Roten Spitzen, as an “orientation point” for her mother’s house, who lives nearby. It gives her a feeling of security and welcome: “it’s just nice when the family is spread all over town, then you always have an anchor point where you know you can go there”. In addition to the dimension of appropriation, the SkatHub also shows the dimension of social relationships: “because I built it together with Hendrik and Lars and we put a lot of time and love into it”. While Ulrike talks about the SkatHub, she emphasises the collaboration, the social interactions and that these are part of what makes the place. Even places where she doesn’t feel comfortable, like the marketplace, because it’s like being on a “platter”, has such positive aspects, because: “you somehow always meet people you know”. In addition to purposeful social interactions and relationships, fleeting social interactions also make places attractive. For Wajd it is important to show that in Altenburg there are not only empty buildings, but also people, which is why she photographed the centre and the old theatre. When she lived in Schmölln, she always looked forward to seeing the centre of Altenburg and the people. The theatre is for her: “A beloved place, not only in Altenburg or for people from Altenburg but also for outsiders. It has made Altenburg known to people from outside”.

1

Based on the 24-hour kiosks in Berlin. Participants of the StadtMensch initiative sell various goods there, insuch as a large selection of beer, food, or second-hand clothes during the usual opening hours in Germany.

The fourth dimension is the memory of the place or the Place-Attachment (Low, Altman 1992). This is connected to the other dimensions in the participants' narratives but can also refer only to the place or occur in an abstract form through similar places to which there is an attachment. Sema, for example, photographed Altenburg Castle in the centre, not because she had memorable experiences of the place itself and associated them with it. She photographed it because it reminds her of her home: "This looks like the old buildings from my home country, it always feeds me". She describes the place as nourishing for her, the place gives her strength and peace through her memories.

In her descriptions of the Casino in Altenburg, Susann emphasises the importance of a place for people: "Many people from Altenburg also have a history with it. There is this dance hall in here. Many people fell in love there and danced and ate there. There used to be a lot of community there. She emphasises how important the project is to promote the acceptance of the people of Altenburg for new things in the city and to strengthen participation and the community in Altenburg. Place-Attachment is also created for the people of the StadtMensch initiative through their actions in the Place. Susann initiates targeted social space-oriented work in Altenburg and initiates projects that strengthen Place-Attachment (especially for young people). In her photo "(Stop) Waiting for the world to change" she designed a big graffiti together with 170 children and painted an old building together with them. She says: "Many kids took part and left traces and that created identification - and the graffiti is still there". A place of identification was created in Altenburg and traces were left that the children will remember in the future when they see the graffiti. The creation of the Place-Attachment was only made possible through the possibility of appropriation and social interactions and (most likely) creates a long-term, positive effect for the children and young people who participated. Ulrike picks up on a similar project in her photo "Leaving traces". She remembers to this day that as a school child she painted the windowpanes of the empty building in the photo and is reminded of this positive experience when she walks past it. For her it is a very personal memory: "It is nice to know that some people know this story and other people wonder why there are these pictures in this abandoned house". The choice of title for the photo emphasises that leaving traces is powerful for a person's attachment to a place.

Growing up in Altenburg and the associated memories of what they experienced are reflected in all the 'natives' who were born in Altenburg of its region. Ulrike says that she doesn't know where to begin to describe where she lives because she grew up in Altenburg and moved around a lot. She does not associate symbols of Altenburg with the town of Altenburg alone, but with her experiences. She associates the Roten Spitzen with her mother's house, the pond with her brother's place of residence. In addition to the dimension of social relations, the associated memories of the place are also decisive in

that the places have a deep emotional connection for her that goes beyond the purely physical nature of the places or the symbolic power for the city. Valentin talks about his family's house, where his grandmother also lives. The physical nature of the place does not sound positive: "First of all, I painted a house where my grandmother lives upstairs and the five of us live downstairs in 90 square metres, which meant that I always slept on the couch in the living room". But the way he talks about it decodes the deep emotional connection he has to the house. He does not judge this circumstance as negative at this moment but revels in thoughts. The significance of the memory for him is echoed again and again. He likes his favourite snack bar because he used to buy food there with friends back in his school days. He paints on the Langgasse partly because he used to walk there to visit his childhood friend. Sema associates the centre of Altenburg with positive emotions when she arrived in Germany and lived in the small town of Schmölln: "When I was in Schmölln, I only wanted to see the centre of Altenburg". She was looking forward to see the centre and getting out of Schmölln. Memories of places do not only unfold their power when the other dimensions appear in the distant past. They give rise to Place-Attachment as soon as they are experienced and trigger positive feelings.

Unwelcoming Spaces

What characterises these places is less the physical level, but more the social practice that takes place in the respective places. Marcel avoids places where he has the feeling of being treated "down to earth". He also quickly leaves groups that are built on the pure principle of performance and neglect the social level: "You don't want to be just a free worker and be seen as a tool". Ulrike describes it like this: "You could say that there are a lot of ruins in Altenburg or some ugly places with rubbish. But I really couldn't say now that there is a place that I don't like. And because I haven't found a place, I'm a person with an open mind about it, so it's not a physical place, it's more in people's minds." For her, it is mainly the people born in Altenburg, who show no initiative, resign and criticise the city, giving the impression that: "they don't actually like their city that much". Valentin finds it difficult to define places as good or bad. He believes that "it's more about the people with whom [...] he] interact[s] and less about the places themselves". Later on, the reinforces this statement with the example of the Rostock shore, where he feels "not so at home": "not because I don't like the place, but rather because of conversations that can be overheard [...] I don't want to have to deal with that, even against whole groups of people". By this, he means racist, far right, and inhuman world views of certain long-term residents of Altenburg who stay there. Susann also refers to such world views in Altenburg South-East, which she visited as part of a project with children: "Some of the people, some of them parents, from whom I ran away at the time were also sitting

there, i.e. classic right-wingers, and they were sitting there with their beer bottles". She has no connection to this part of town; she thinks it lacks soul. She is particularly critical of a hexagonal poster pillar, the "hexagon" on which offensive graffiti is sprayed and in front of which alcoholics meet to drink. Public alcoholism is picked up in a comment by Marcel: "By the playgrounds then there are also children, but next to them then there are also people drinking alcohol". The place is described as disorganised and neglected. Susann, in turn, also sees that it is not a definitive form of place. What makes these places unplaces is related to local politics and civil society and can be transformed with targeted political, structural, and social actions. She cites the district of Altenburg North as an example: "People say that Altenburg North used to be Altenburg South [...] but it still has the stigma 'what you live in the block', but it has become really beautiful, a lot of deconstructions, a lot of green spaces, so actually everything you need. She says of Altenburg South-East: "But we have to go there with projects" to transform the place. Susann describes in her photo "(Stop) Waiting for the world to change" that local politics is not open to changes from civil society. After her action with the children, an order was immediately issued to remove the graffiti, although the building had previously been smeared with slogans, had been empty for a long time and was in ruins. She symbolised it with the stop sign in the picture.

The construction of the Hofsalon is seen by Valentin as an opportunity to include some of the people with a mindset that the participants previously devised as decisive for Unwelcoming: "that in connection with this construction of a space for people who will come together from different directions and life plans and ideas in this place and meet and exchange ideas, meet at eye level, with very different stories, is perhaps a new beginning. Also, for the people who once left the old block". Susann, in describing her Unwelcoming Spaces, also says that she has a "disturbed relationship with Altenburg South-East" but at the same time she says: "but we have to go there with projects" in order to change something.

In summary, for the participants, unwelcoming spaces are places that are mostly characterised and visited by people who are politically and socially resigned or even racist and politically right-wing. Furthermore, they are places that are neglected by local politics, where civil society actions and initiatives are few or non-existent and only few opportunities are offered to transform them or to appropriate the place.



Talayuela, Alvaro Minguito

Talayuela is a semi-rural inland town that belongs to the county of Campo Arañuelo, at the province of Cáceres, located in the Autonomous Community of Extremadura, close to Portugal but not quite at the border. Until the 20th century, Talayuela remained practically uninhabited, emerging under the promotion of colonisation settlements from national newcomers. In the 90's, new inhabitants of foreign background, first from Portugal and Poland, later from the other side of the Strait of Gibraltar, from Senegal and especially Morocco, began to arrive and settle, adding up to become 30% of the total population, although coexisting in parallel, in peace but in silence. Nowadays, 7,328 inhabitants (INE², 2021) populate the municipality, approximately 30% of them come from migrant background.

These populations, the one with migrant background and the one without migrant background, live as walkers in a railroad, failing to encounter due to a latent disengagement and to the absence of shared spaces. Where to embrace the differences of the human condition and learn from them? A fertile land allowed for decades to develop an economy based on the cultivation of tobacco, lately a sector in decline, that has been slowly replaced by peppers, paprika, asparagus, tomatoes and corn, together with a solar energy project. People welcomes people: a sibling, a friend, a co-worker, and the scarce third sector adds its bit to the mix. International newcomers keep arriving, young adults keep seeking for opportunities elsewhere, and meanwhile the land keeps feeding their guests unaware of their nationalities.

2

Spanish National Statistic Institute.



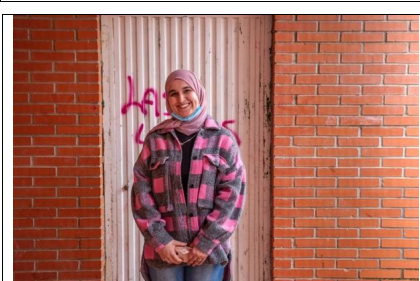
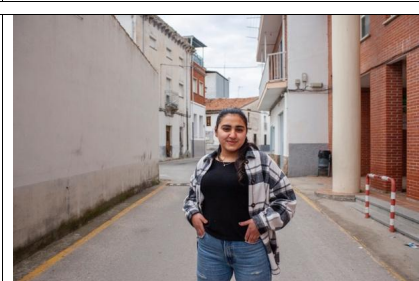

The people involved in the project

The participants

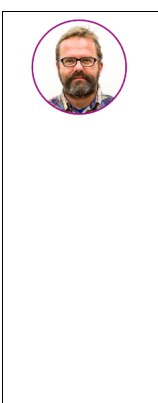
In order to promote the project and encourage the recruitment of participants, two strategies were used. On the one hand, partner institutions and organisations on the ground were sought to provide information on the activity, both through the networks established by the Cepaim Foundation, present in the province, and through related entities, such as the Women's Foundation or the Spanish League for Education, the Talayuela Town Council, the cultural association related to the mosque, etc. Contacts were made by e-mail and brief telephone interviews for this purpose. On the other hand, the organising team also put up posters in various local establishments and strategic public spaces such as parks, bus stops, information panels, etc., also talking about the project with neighbours who were passing by in the streets during the poster-posting.






Finally, 5 people attended the workshop, in this case, with the particularity

that all of them are youngsters (between 20 and 40 years old) of migrant origin, 4 women and 1 man. However, there was variability in terms of their permanence in the territory, with some people being long-term neighbours and others recently settled. The team of researchers was composed of Lucia Santaballa and Kein Espineira from the University of A Coruna.

	
<p>Asmaa al-Mustafa, aged 38, born in Morocco, has been living in Spain all her youth, having lived in several countries throughout her life.</p>	<p>Fatna Berrakhli, aged 21, born in Morocco, resident of Talayuuela for almost 5 years.</p>
	
<p>Hanan Khalloufi, aged 21, born in Morocco, has been living in Talayuuela for 5 years.</p>	<p>Salma Afkir, aged 19, born in Morocco, has lived in Talayuuela for three years.</p>
	<p>Youssef Meziane Yaala, aged 33, born in Morocco, moved to Spain when he has 10 and since the age of 16 became a proud inhabitant of Talayuuela.</p>

The organizing team

	<p>The photographer who conducted the workshop - Álvaro Minguito - graduated in Economics and Social Anthropology, he has been working as a full-time photojournalist for more than 12 years, mainly interested in social issues. He is currently coordinator of photography at the Spanish newspaper El Salto. He also works as a graphic editor for the paper editions of the magazine La Marea, bimonthly, and Climática, annual. He is an associate lecturer in Photojournalism at the Faculty of Journalism at the UCLM in Cuenca. He combines this work with the development of research projects, such as the recent #PorTodas project, which aims to analyse various cases of femicide in Spain. Since 2020, she has accompanied archaeological teams in their research and campaigns in various countries in the Horn of Africa to record images of the materials investigated, as well as their subsequent dissemination (https://www.elsaltodiario.com/autor/alvaro-minguito // https://www.alvarominguito.net/)</p>
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The Welcoming Spaces project researchers -	
	Melissa Moralli , PhD professor at the University of Bologna and visiting professor at CRISES (Centre de Recherche sur les Innovations Sociales, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada), IPK (Institute for Public Knowledge, New York University, USA) and CRISES Redefined (University of Jyväskylä, Finland). Her research interests are social innovation, migration and responsible tourism. She is also interested in action research and participatory methodology. She is currently involved in the "Atlas of Transitions project. New geographies for an intercultural Europe" and "Welcoming Spaces. Revitalisation of areas in decline by welcoming non-EU immigrants". She is the author of the book "Innovazione sociale. Pratiche e processi per ripensare le comunità".
The Societies in Movement Research Team (ESOMI), attached to the Faculty of Sociology of the UDC, is linked, on the one hand, to the fact that the people who make up this group are involved in it, and on the other hand, to its subject matter, given that it tackles head-on several of its lines of research in relation to development, depopulation and inequalities, among others. Furthermore, as described in detail in the background section, ESOMI is currently developing the H2020 Welcoming Spaces project, which includes extensive research on people on the move in rural areas and the dynamics of revitalisation.	
	Keina Espiñeira - Associate Researcher in the Dept. of Sociology at the University of A Coruña, working on the H2020 project: Welcoming Spaces, which analyses the facilitating factors for the creation of welcoming spaces in rural areas. PhD in Political Science from the Complutense University of Madrid (2016), and Master in Experimental Documentary Film (University of Alcalá, 2014). Her main lines of work focus on the study of border-migration-asylum policies and technologies in the EU. Her empirical work is based in the Western Mediterranean, with extensive experience in Morocco. She was a visiting researcher at Harvard and Berkeley Universities in the USA, Nijmegen Center for Border Research in the Netherlands, Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech and Abdelmalek Essaâdi University in Tangier.
	Leticia Santaballa – She is a PhD researcher in the Welcoming Spaces project. With a degree in Psychology (University of Santiago de Compostela), she oriented her career towards Local Development and Migration Studies, completing a Master in International Cooperation, specialising in integrated local development management (University of Valencia) and a Master in Social Policies and Community Intervention, specialising in Migrations (University of A Coruña). Alternating academic studies with fieldwork in migration, she has extensive work experience in Spain, Greece and France.
Cepaim Foundation technicians	
	Carmen Ayllón - Carmen Ayllón is a project technician in the Rural Development area of the Cepaim Foundation. She has a degree in International Studies (Complutense University of Madrid) and a Master in International Solidarity Action and Social Inclusion (Carlos III University of Madrid). She has experience in Greece and Turkey in different projects related to migration and has worked in political advocacy in the Greek Refugee Forum (Athens) and Entreculturas (Madrid). She is interested in migration, social movements and community organising.
	Irene Almazán - Irene Almazán is a project technician in the area of Rural Development at the Cepaim Foundation. She holds a Double Degree in Translation and Interpreting and International Relations from Comillas Pontifical University and a Master's Degree in Migration and Diaspora from SOAS, University of London. She has experience in migration, rural development and European affairs after working for two years in the Permanent Delegation of Castilla y León to the European Union in Brussels, working in different third sector organisations such as Acción contra el Hambre and volunteering in France, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

The workshop

The workshop lasted two full days; it was organized during the weekend to enhance participation.

It was held in a public space, the local cultural centre, on offer from the town

council.

The space was a classroom with tables and chairs, equipped with a projector, screen and blackboard.



The agenda during the sessions on the 26th of March and 27th of March was the following:

Day 1

Morning

- 12:30h Opening: The Welcoming Spaces Project brief presentation + round of personal presentations, where all the participants and organizers were encouraged to describe themselves by saying their names, their origins, the moment they arrived to Talayuela, and as an ice-breaker exercise, the animal they like or identify with.
- Collective map-making - step 1, drawing Talayuela on a blank roll, following the common methodology. The sound was recorded during the process of agreement with the participants. Short individual presentations showed the rest of the team (participants and organizers) their own map.
- Photographer's introduction - the workshop's goals - presentation that combined information with practical exercises.

Lunch break – shared meal in a local restaurant

Afternoon

- 16:00h Camera workshop (shots, image composition, technicalities). Again, an engaging presentation, with a predominance of images and key words that facilitated the understanding of the participants, some of whom had limited comprehension of Spanish. The explanations offered by the photographer were simple, easy to follow, the general tone of the session being one of conviviality.

Day 2.

Morning 10:30h

- Cameras into the field. Taking pictures of welcoming and unwelcoming spaces in Talayuela. Final meeting point to include the images into the project's hard disk. The research team and the photographer make a pre-selection in order to activate a group dynamic for the afternoon session. During the morning, participants went to the by couples to take pictures, as the number of cameras was limited.

Lunch break – shared meal in a local restaurant

Afternoon 16:00h

- Collective map-making - step 2, each participant will select 10 photos + discussion group + map-making. From a broad initial pre-selection of 140 pictures, made by the photographer and one of the organizers, in the first round 10 pictures/participant were selected, and in the second round, 2 pictures/participant were selected from the 10. The final 2 stages of selection were made by the authors of the pictures, with the advice of the photographer. A title for each picture was also given.
- Feedback from workshop participants. Time for reflection and closure. During the evaluation, it was stressed that the contact with the organizers was very positive, that it was a place of learning, comments of gratitude, some participants even said that it was too short.

Methodological note

The methodological premises employed coincide with those adopted in the rest of the partner countries (PhotoVoice and mapping), as well as the collection of data, the focuses of the data or the ethics.

The aspects that could perhaps be highlighted as distinctive of the methodology used in Spain have been the crucial role that networking, the creation of a safe space, and the work with young people of migrant background have made. Networking has been fundamental prior and during the workshop, as the locality where it took place was carried out was unfamiliar to the team, being able to secure adequate space for its implementation, as well as the recruitment of participants. The communication style, the selection of dynamics, the distribution of the space in the classroom and the instructions provided led to the creation of a safe space, contributed to create a favourable environment for personal exchange and data collection. Although it is necessary to consider the positionality of the organisers when evaluating the results, which could have influenced the answers towards desirability.

Brief description of the maps and the photos by the participants

Mapping the village of Talayuela

The same colour code has been used as in the other participant countries. The participants were drawing next to each other, and the time given to complete the activity was 15 minutes.

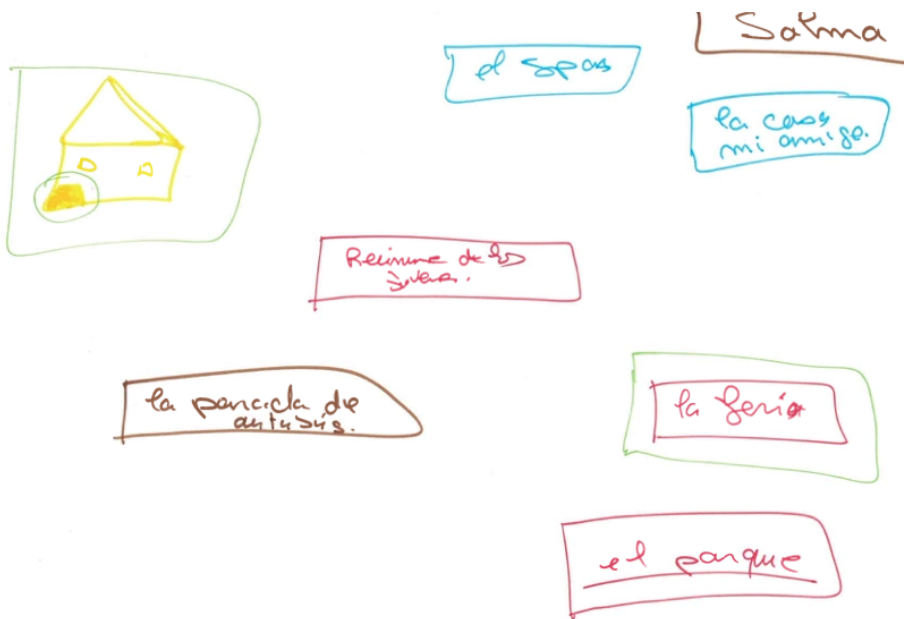
Asmaa al-Mustafa



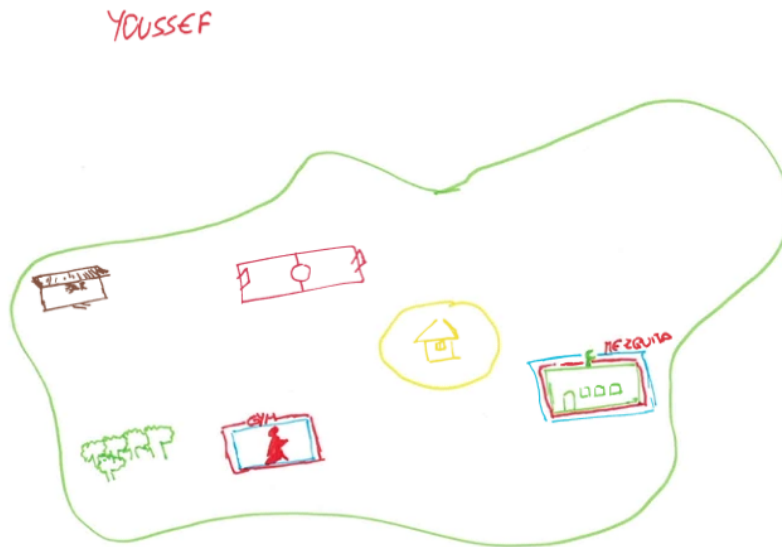
“This is my map. In general I feel very well in all of Talayuela, to be honest. The place where I visited the most and where I worked the most, for almost three years, was the area, that area, where the golf course was. And the truth is that I like all the green areas of Talayuela, I love them. And I don't like the places where there are construction sites, where you have to go round and round to park. And nothing else, in general, I like the bear park, the meadow, everything, I love all those areas... and then, the main street, it's also beautiful.”

“Yellow places on my map: my house. Places where I usually go: to the fair, my friend Fatna’s house and my friend Salma’s house, the park, the shop, that’s it. Places I like is the adult school, where I study, uh...the meadow, which is on the road to Santa Maria. What else? Places I feel good: at home, in the house of culture with Aziz, my uncle’s house, also the meeting of young people in Aziz’s garage, in the park with my friends. Places I don’t like: the town hall, the dentist... this is my map.”

Salma Afkir



“The truth is that I don’t live here for many years, almost two and a half years, almost three. Well, the truth is that I don’t usually go to many places, that’s why there isn’t much. Well, my house is the place where I inhabit, especially in my room. And the places I usually go to are the SPAR, the shop, and my friend Hanan’s house. And the places I like...the fair, there’s a place where they always put on the fair (the San Marcos fair, it lasts for a month). And I also like that the big park (the one called “the park of the bear”), and I like that every Friday, the young people meet in Aziz’s garage, I don’t know if you know it? And the places where I feel good, well, my house, and also the fair. And the places I don’t like, the place where I wait for the bus, the bus stop, which I don’t like at all”.



“I have put the map of Talayuela in green because in Talayuela in general I feel comfortable, well. This is my house, it’s almost in the centre, so... well described. Places where I usually go, I usually go to the gym, that’s where I spend a lot of time and it’s a place where I like it, it’s my hobby, my hobby, and I have a good time. Places where I usually go, to the mosque, it’s also something I like and it’s something where I feel good. Also, on Sunday mornings I take care of the children who go to study at the mosque, I take care of them by playing a game of football, and it’s a time when I enjoy it, I go out with my head like this (big gesture) but I enjoy it. And... places where I feel good, well, apart from Talayuela in general, well... green places, green places that we have here in the area, what the colleague said, the meadow, the meadow is a super, super cool place, the pine forest... everything behind the “park of the bear” are super cool places. Hey... I’ve painted it brown here... it’s a problem, okay? The place where I had, let’s say, the worst experience here in Talayuela, was in a bar here where they made me stand up just because I wasn’t Spanish. It’s shocking, I also had the same look on my face when they did it to me, I said... “Is this a joke? No, it’s not a joke”. So it’s the only place where I don’t feel good, apart from anything else. Well, in general, Talayuela... I am very fond of Talayuela.”

Asmaa al-Mustafa



Paisajes marroquíes / Moroccan scenery

“I would say it’s like a transfer from Africa to Europe. This poster is all over Morocco. It shows that here, in Talayuela, immigrants live, and other nationalities live. This sign has been there since 2000. It says public telephone and video, but the shop is no longer open. This can be found on any street corner in Morocco. The shop also means something to me that you miss, you feel the distances.”



La centralita / Information hub

“It represents the social life in Morocco here. Older people tend to meet in the street, chat, what’s up? It’s a nice day, business. People talk at that time, even who marries whom. Yes, yes, a lot of business is done in these corners. In Morocco, for example, it is called “the police”, people who know everything

about everyone. In what this photo represents, I see two issues. The first is respect, the continuation of life in Morocco, but at the same time asking, is it right to follow that here? Because it's not popular here for people to meet in the street to talk, it's not common here, no."

Fatna Berrakhli



Realidad / Reality

"I am attracted by the colours. The colours of the clothes make sense in real life. The most important thing in the picture is the house. As the house has no balcony and lacks several things, the clothes are hung outside. And the house needs to be rebuilt. I feel like if I touch this house with my fingers, it will fall down. This is reality."



Misterio / Mystery

"I see this picture as a desert, and in the middle, there are parts that are white. It gives me hope because, anyone in the desert, you don't know where you're

going to go. You don't know what's around you because it's all desert, but these white parts give me a sense of hope. I would call it a mystery because you don't know what's going to happen."

Hanan Khalloufi



Tranquilidad / Peacefulness

"Life at ease in the countryside. I feel very good in the countryside. I am alone with trees. I come here for a walk very often. I would call it peacefulness".



Juventud / Youth

"The photo is taken on the move, it is on the outskirts of the village. I like the clear sky. They are my friends, it's like they are leaving. It also represents the youth leaving the village."



La vida / Life

"This is where the elders meet. I don't know what activities they do inside. We are young. None of our relatives go there. Only a year ago we went with a teacher to the cafeteria to learn Spanish. She wanted to help us. She came from Navalmoral [another nearby town]. She took us to the café, we sat at a table and there we took Spanish lessons."



Arte / Art

It doesn't transmit anything, I simply liked the painting, the colours and this phrase: No to gender violence. This sentence makes sense. This is not a centre against gender violence, it is the swimming pool, but the mural is for women.



La dehesa / Pastureland

“I was struck by the place. The place and the center of the photo, la antenna. This place is going to the meadow. It is a very nice place where there are houses with plots of land. Here is the antenna. There are paths here, they are long paths that cross the national road and go to the meadow that belongs to the village. People come to walk here. This whole area is a green place. I like the image itself, but I don't know if it is representative, I would have to take something representative of the village and I don't know if it is. The village is representative of diversity.”

“I have a picture in mind, but I don't know when to take it. It's a picture of the mosque, of people walking and entering the mosque. I want to catch the moment that I have in my mind.”



Pueblo vivo / A living village

“I like this photo. In this place is the high school. Next to it is the Guardia Civil. But what is the pearl of the photo is the children’s park and I like it because it represents what Talayuela is, a rural town that has a lot of green areas and a lot of children, indeed it is the youngest village in Extremadura. I had planned to photograph this area because it is a beautiful area and above all because this is where the children gather in the afternoon, and next door in the pavilion where the young people used to gather in my day. When we were 15, 16 years old, we all used to meet there. They don’t meet there anymore, now they have different spots.”

Analysis of the data

The project is linked to migration and social change, as it brings new insights into three interrelated issues: the dynamics and evolution of migration in Europe, going beyond the urban context by seeking to understand migration and social change in rural areas; the processes of adaptation, integration and transformation of migrants and receiving societies in devitalising European regions, focusing on the narratives produced by local communities; and the cultural and political self-understanding of receiving societies and migrants through the co-construction of alternative narratives.

The photographs in general represented the places where the participants feel at ease, being places that they transit, inhabit or visit frequently. However, some other spaces that appeared as highly relevant during the mapping exercise were barely represented through the pictures, probably related to their private nature, such as in the case of the participants’ homes. The fact that the photographs were taken in pairs may also have determined the choice of places to visit, as it had to be agreed upon.

The motives and methodology behind shooting photographs have not been unanimous. In some cases, the pictures were captured for predominantly aesthetic reasons or to some element that grabbed the attention, and the explanation was searched *ex post*, like Salma does; in other cases, there is a preceding reflection on what is to be shown through the photograph and where to find it, as in the case of a picture finally not selected by Youssef, which represented, according to this participant, the essence of the locality: “the children in the centre and nature around them”. In other cases, shooting to abstract elements led to personal reflections and thoughts on the experience of living in Talayuela, as Fatna described.

When the participants were asked if there are any photos that have not been taken that they would like to see, they replied affirmatively and agree mostly in two locations: A photo of the roundabout at the entrance to the village, because at that point there was a camel and a woman washing clothes, at the entrance to Talayuela: “I would have liked it because the camels come and it reminds me of Morocco, and the person washing clothes also reminds me of Morocco, in an old-fashioned way” (Fatna). The mosque was also described

as a place that some participants would have liked to take pictures of: “I would have liked to photograph the mosque inside because it is very beautiful, but I knew I couldn’t do it because now is not the time” (Asmaa).

Typology of welcoming and unwelcoming spaces

The discussion generated during the selection of photographs has sparked off a certain number of key ideas. Among them is the conception of welcoming spaces as bridges between the territory of departure and the current territory of residence, giving the possibility of continuing the traditions or habits acquired before on the new life or smoothing the transit from one to the other (i.e., the way of meeting on the streets, the way of hanging clothes, etc.). Briefly, and related to the previous idea, Asmaa posed a question within her own reflection, whether it would be appropriate to keep “the Moroccan way of life” so alive in Spain, question that remained rhetorical as nobody replied in the two occasions that was stated.

The spaces that appear as unwelcoming or unpleasant, are so in a particular way for each participant, that is, they hardly coincide, apart from the dentist, who is mentioned by two of the participants (Fatna and Hanan). The bus stop, the town hall and the banks where it is not pleasant to do paperwork (Hanan), or the bar where the episode of xenophobia recounted by Youssef took place, are not portrayed in a photo, nor are they mentioned again during the final discussion. Conversely, the welcoming spaces, or spaces where people feel good, were mentioned both in the private sphere, such as homes or businesses, and in the public sphere, such as in parks or gardens. And in this case, there is a high degree of convergence among the participants. Without a doubt, the green areas are the places understood to be the most welcoming, appearing both on the mapping, the discussion and in the pictures. Where nature takes centre stage, the adjective “tranquillity” or “peacefulness” was highly valued.

Nevertheless, not all welcoming/unwelcoming spaces refer to physical places, but to activities, or initiatives, adopting a more symbolic dimension, as in the mentioned case of the meeting of young people in Aziz’s garage every Friday, (Aziz being an intercultural mediator from a local NGO). Although the participants have identified a variety of reception spaces in the drawings, photographs and discussion, most of them are linked to cultural spaces, such as the adult school or the gymnasium, and even to places such as the swimming pool mural, in their artistic expression, and especially to care spaces, such as their own home or that of loved ones, the pensioner’s home, etc. It is also important to note that there are temporary welcoming spaces, such as the example of the fair, not permanent but highly recognizable. In other words, welcoming spaces appear to exist under a diversity of natures. Additionally, there are spaces of welcome that emerge from collective identification, but others that are personal to each participant, individual, from the point of view of the conceptualisation.

Among the most predominant narratives, a certain nostalgia can be identified, in which the participants, all migrant origin and of Moroccan origin, highlight the parallels or similarities between Morocco and Spain, the “reflections of the culture, something that feels very familiar, that is a continuation of life and routine in Morocco” (Asmaa’). However, there are plenty references to the future, to the future time understood as a possibility of improvement, as when the topic of selling land for sale is mentioned in the discussion: “In the village there are many signs for businesses, houses, land for sale. What do they generate in you? “Nothing, indifference” (Salma) “For example, when I see a sign like this, it makes me think that there is a future. It’s not like a city, I see that there is an opportunity for people to invest in the countryside”. (Asmaa) or the old house with the clothes hanging outside: “I would like to change these old houses, fix them up. I believe that everyone has the right to live in a decent, habitable house” (Fatna). “I wouldn’t destroy anything, they are beautiful, even if they are old, they have lives. Why should we destroy and make something new? We have to restore” (Asmaa). Then, underlying the descriptions arises the idea of the possibility of change, the need for reform, the hope... it is possible that their vital, youthful moment has something to do with it, or perhaps other factors that underlie a fundamentally positive and proactive attitude towards the future. Nevertheless, the youngest participants all imagine their future lives away from Talayuela, inhabiting other Spanish cities, meanwhile the older participants are already settled and wishing to remain.

The locality of Talayuela seems to be identified by the participants with the term “diversity”, and also “youth” and “nature”. But other less positive connotations also arose during the workshop, like the presence of racism: “I know that there are people who are racist but there are... that not all people are the same”(Fatna), or the “boredom” due to the lack of leisure activities for youth, which remains a widespread vision in the territories undergoing devitalisation in rural Spain.

Further reflections

The growing global reflection on the challenges and potentials of migration for regional development, especially for rural, mountainous and peri-urban regions (Perlik, 2019), and the proliferation of socially innovative initiatives aimed at welcoming them (Rygiel & Baban, 2019). Given the local scale of these initiatives, their spatial dispersion and political sensitivity, narratives remain under-researched, despite their contribution to counter-hegemonic imaginaries of migration.

In many European countries, prevailing narratives about migrants living in peripheral areas are limited to issues of vulnerability and/or criminality. Thus, beyond the interpretative mechanics at the level of the imaginary

(Castoriadis, 1997), our project contributes to visualising local perspectives as a transformative tool. The proposed activities are aligned with SDGs 10 and 11. SDG 10 (Reducing inequalities), in its target 10.2, aims to “empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all people, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”. The activities allow us to delve into the existing challenges and opportunities for the inclusion of people of non-EU origin in the Spanish countryside, which is ethnically, religiously and economically diverse. With regard to SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), target 11.a seeks to “support positive economic, social and environmental linkages between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning”. By adopting visual methods (Nikielska-Sekula, Desille, 2021), the voices of young people with a migrant background are amplified about the host societies and geographies, extending them to the urban environment, to inform, raise awareness and invite reflection.

Final discussion and co-evaluation

The striking fact that no inhabitant of local background, or of non-migrant descent, came to the workshop is already an indicative of the disengagement present in the locality among the population. If further focus is put on the description of the places where people feel at ease in Talayuela, it could be observed that, in most cases, are places or activities to build or strengthen ties with people considered from the same ethnic group, thus, in the territory there is a notable predominancy of bonding capital (Putnam, 2000).

The answers remained positive when the participants were asked about how they have felt taking the photographs, they expressed unanimously the feeling enjoyment. When reflecting on the sensations generated by the act of photographing and the possibilities of communication that photography offers as a visual language, the general feeling is that “The photo itself speaks a lot” (Asmaa) but it is not easy to capture the images and translate it into the concept one aimed to express: “It is not easy, for example, I can see things in this orange photo (Mystery) that someone else may not see” (Fatna). They recognize that each picture has several possibilities when it comes to interpretation, and the importance of being familiarized to the framework: “It depends, if I am from the village and I see the photo I can understand what it says, but another person who is not from the village may see another idea, different” (Fatna).

The camera as a device and the action of composing and photographing has activated a different layer in the way they look at the place they live in. A third gaze, even making her feel like a third person discovering the place through the camera. “For example, you see a Talayuela that has nothing, but if you go with a camera and you go consciously, you can find many things” (Fatna). This comment evidence that in the process of taking the pictures, she has

realised that there is much more to see than you could initially imagine, in a process of recognition.

This project, of great awareness-raising value, generated a threefold impact from its subsequent dissemination, and the return of information:

- Enhance intercultural awareness.
- The acquisition of information and arguments on the processes of rural devitalisation and their consequences.
- Broaden the repertoire of tools to carry out scientific research, by approaching alternative, artistic and image-based research methodologies.

Providing the future audience with new perspectives to understand the pathways of reception and inclusion of migrants in rural areas, as well as the narratives that are created about them. It invites to reflection on the topics addressed, it is expected that the results will disseminate in the spectator's environment (both physical and digital), thus contributing to making the reality that concerns this project more visible.



Towards new narratives for communities living in European shrinking areas: final remarks

The results of the research can be divided into two main categories: the main results answering the research question, connected to the typologies of visualities and knowledge on the welcoming spaces developed in shrinking areas, and the results emerged in terms of knowledge co-construction, deriving mainly from the use of participatory and visual methodologies and an approach to the research as learning process.

As far as the first category is concerned, although the research was

undertaken in different spatial, cultural, economic, and social contexts, and therefore is not comparable, some main insights connected to welcoming and unwelcoming spaces emerged.

First, various places of “present nostalgia” emerged. Albeit with different aesthetic devices, many of the participants took photographs representing the places where they currently live in relation to their past history and background. These places of “present nostalgia” connect to their own personal experience in different ways: through a common element (a flower, a stream, a bridge, clothes hanging outside, etc.), through aesthetic elements (e.g.: the colour orange reminding the desert), or through more abstract and symbolic references (e.g.: a railing reminding the job of the son living far away). Other times, however, it is the architectural element that refers to buildings in the country of origin, as in the case of the Altenburg castle that resembles an Azerbaijani castle according to a participant.

Second, the relation with nature had a predominant role: many of the pictures taken by the participants (both newcomers and older residents) connected the anthropic landscape with natural elements, such as the green fields, trees, mountains, and water landscape (the sea, rivers, lakes, etc.). This opens new reflections on the public and collective use of public space, on nature as a commons and, in general, the access to nature. Although migration is often connected to urban life, and to very anthropised spaces, the research showed that for the participants natural spaces have a crucial role, also in terms of well-being. This aspect emerged not only in small villages such as Camini or Talayuela but also in somewhat larger centres such as Altenburg. From the participants’ stories and the captions to the photographs, unwelcoming spaces also emerged (e.g. spaces with restricted access, dirty spaces or spaces of political conflict). The denunciation of these unwelcoming spaces seems to demonstrate a willingness to participate in the public life of the place where one resides (e.g.: unclean public benches in Lomza) or to find spaces for negotiation and transformation in order to improve one’s situation (e.g.: restoring one’s grandfather’s vegetable garden in Camini or denouncing having suffered an act of racism in Talayuela).

Moreover, reflecting on one’s relationship with space, whether through mapping or through photography, opened up new spaces for imagining the future and reflecting critically on one’s aspirations. These spaces of imagination for the future concerned both one’s own life and that of one’s family, and were also linked with concrete possibilities of transformation of the host place (e.g. the possibility of building a mosque in Camini or reflecting on the future of one’s children in Bedum). The aesthetic and visual element contributed, therefore, to rethinking one’s place in the world in terms of change and hope for the future.

Sometimes the spaces described as welcoming are not real spaces, but activities. They are, therefore, spaces that have a processual nature, that narrate the daily activities of people living in more or less isolated places, as in the case of the English lessons in Aziz’s garage in Talayuela or the 8 a.m. bus that all the inhabitants of Camini take on Saturdays to go shopping in the valley.

A heterogeneity of spaces considered welcoming in terms of private and

public spaces emerged. There does not seem to be a prevalence of private or public spaces: the relationship between these two types of space use seems well balanced. However, the importance of public space or collectively shared spaces (a square, a church, a café, a lawn, etc.) as social infrastructures, capable of sustaining social relations over time and creating spaces of coexistence, clearly emerges.

The photographs also demonstrated different spaces of participation in public life (as in the case of the café or cultural centres), as well as real processes of appropriation of space, as in the case of the Altenburg mural or the re-signification of sacred spaces as spaces for relaxation. Some of the participants thus demonstrated their active contribution to the place-making processes of the shrinking areas, shaping their everyday life in these often underrepresented spaces.

With regard to the second category of results, those connected to the process of knowledge co-construction and the use of participatory visual methods, the research contributed to:

- Visualising the narratives of small communities in shrinking regions, focusing on the dynamics between long-term residents and migrants and amplifying their voice on non-urban socially innovative initiatives through the co-creation of visual contents. This provided new perspectives to understand the pathways of reception and inclusion of migrants in these areas.
- Realising knowledge co-construction and collective learning. The project represented an opportunity to understand that revitalisation can also be conceived through the discursive dimension. Hence, the research becomes a process of “collective learning”, based on the collaboration between researchers, societal actors and inhabitants.
- Valorising interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. The team consists of members from different disciplinary backgrounds (e.g. sociology, geography, economics, political studies, art and design studies, etc.) and societal partners, which collaborated with professional photographers, art schools and cultural organisations and the local communities of the selected five case studies.
- Strengthening cooperation with societal partners and bridging the gap between science and society. The societal partners participates directly in the research process and were also considered as gatekeepers to involve engaged photographers and artists, local inhabitants and other societal partners for both research and network building.

To conclude, the project contributed also to the following social impact:

- Co-construction of auto-narratives on the selected initiatives through the direct participation of societal partners and the local communities, as well as social cohesion, interactions and mutual exchange valorising individual backgrounds and competencies in intercultural terms.
- Creative dissemination of the results through a digital exhibition and numerous photo exhibitions in all the participating countries as a public event, amplifying the voice of local communities and connecting rural and urban contexts on migration and local development.

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